





The Second-Most Asked Question

Before I get into this, I first must divulge what I, personally, consider to be the single-most penetrating and important question to ask any cartoonist. And no one has ever once asked me this. Get ready: *So, [name of cartoonist], tell me—what kind of pen do you use?*

Thrilling, isn't it? You can use it, if you wish, the next time you cross paths with someone who draws for a living. But I'm serious—it's the one thing I wondered about when I started out as a cartoonist. I may even ask it now. (Obviously, I never have very long conversations with other cartoonists.)

For me, everything else relates to the creative process, and I have never been able to deconstruct that invisible beast without ultimately being devoured by it.

So, please, let's move on from any exploration of that most-asked question regarding my cartoons, *Where do you get your ideas?* Not that I have ever begrudged anyone for asking it. (Hell, I guess no one's going to ask what kind of pen I use.) It's just that it's beyond my own understanding.

The second-place contender is an entirely *different* question, and one that has always fascinated me because I'm intrigued with why so many people have asked it: *How long does it take you to draw a cartoon?*

My initial response: Well, which cartoon are we talking about here? Does it involve amoebas or an anthill? A family of stick people or an army of Vikings? A lone vulture soaring overhead or a traffic jam in midtown? Just point the cartoon out to me and I'll scratch my head and come up with some lie.

I've suspected an ulterior motive from some people who ask me this question. I think they want to check to see if I'm *really* working. In other words, is cartooning a real job? If that's the hidden question, the answer is easy. No—it's not a real job. The guy laying asphalt in mid-July on a Louisiana highway has a real job. And I've had real jobs in my past. This was not one of them. What I did for a living was try to make that guy laying asphalt crack up once in a while so he didn't look around and notice I wasn't out there alongside him.

But I'm working on an additional theory: that this kind of question is an outgrowth of American culture. We just seem to want to quantify everything. *How much horsepower does that baby have? ... How much did they soak you for that? ... How much does that sucker weigh? ... How much time elapses before the female eats the male?* (Actually, it may not be just an American thing; I once read that some forest dwellers in Brazil distinguish between several kinds of venomous snakes based on the number of steps a bitten person can take before dropping dead. A

So (I'm back), how long *did* it take for me to draw an average cartoon? Honestly, I can't compute that with any real certainty. (See why I like that pen question so much?) First of all, I enjoyed what I did. And when you enjoy doing something, time is a disconnect. Not that you can afford to ignore the clock entirely; if you're a syndicated cartoonist under contract, you have deadlines. Mine were weekly, and the lag time between the time I submitted something and when it showed up in a newspaper was about three weeks. But I'll never complain about deadlines to that guy laying asphalt. I would lose that whining contest.

There's also a critical part of the equation that has nothing to do with the physical execution of the cartoon, and that's the time invested in just sitting, staring, and thinking. And it's difficult to know if you're not, in truth, just doing the first two. (Sometimes I think it wouldn't have been a bad thing if a Lou Grant-type person burst into my office once in a while and said, "Larson! Draw!")

Finally, on to the “Looks Are Deceiving” category, and for that I’ve included an example, “Houdini’s final undoing.” I remember all too well my long day in hell with this cartoon.

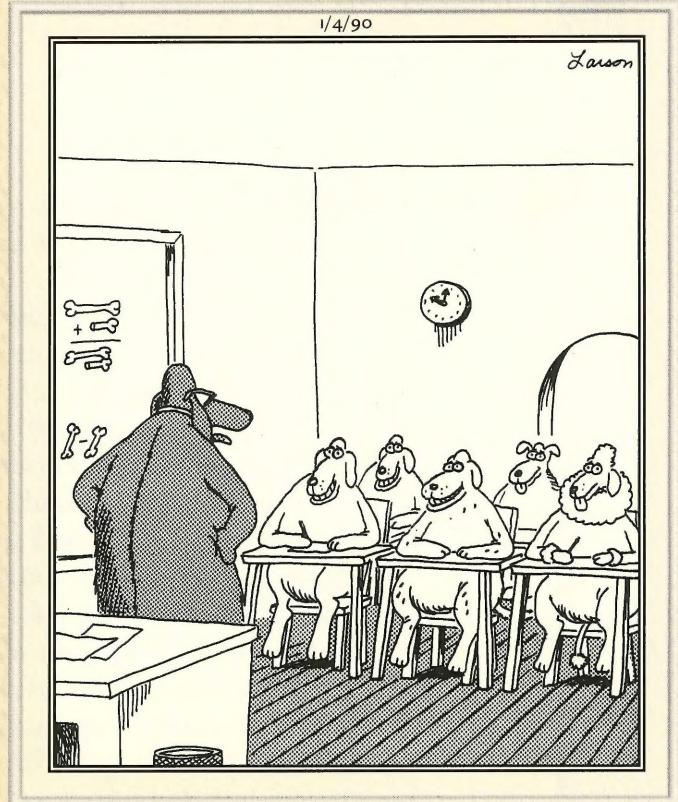
A simple concept, really: Houdini has apparently met his match in a pair of Chinese handcuffs, with tragic results for the famous escape artist. Now, if you will, please pretend that you are the Cartoon Coroner and take a closer look at the "deceased." What we have here is a decomposed body, with the main focus on the head. If it's too gruesome, it doesn't work. If it's too corny, it doesn't work. The expression on that face has to simultaneously capture silliness and scariness, horror and hilarity, sadness and stupidity. For me, this meant draw, erase, draw, erase, draw, erase ... for hours. I couldn't get it, although I think in the end I got sort of close. (I now see that the head should have been tilted forward just a little, dammit.) If it hadn't been for my deadline, I might be sitting there to this very day, doomed to draw Houdini's skull for the rest of my life until I, too, am discovered one day looking much like this very drawing, only perhaps funnier.

How long does it take for me to draw a cartoon? Let it go. Ask me what kind of pen I use.

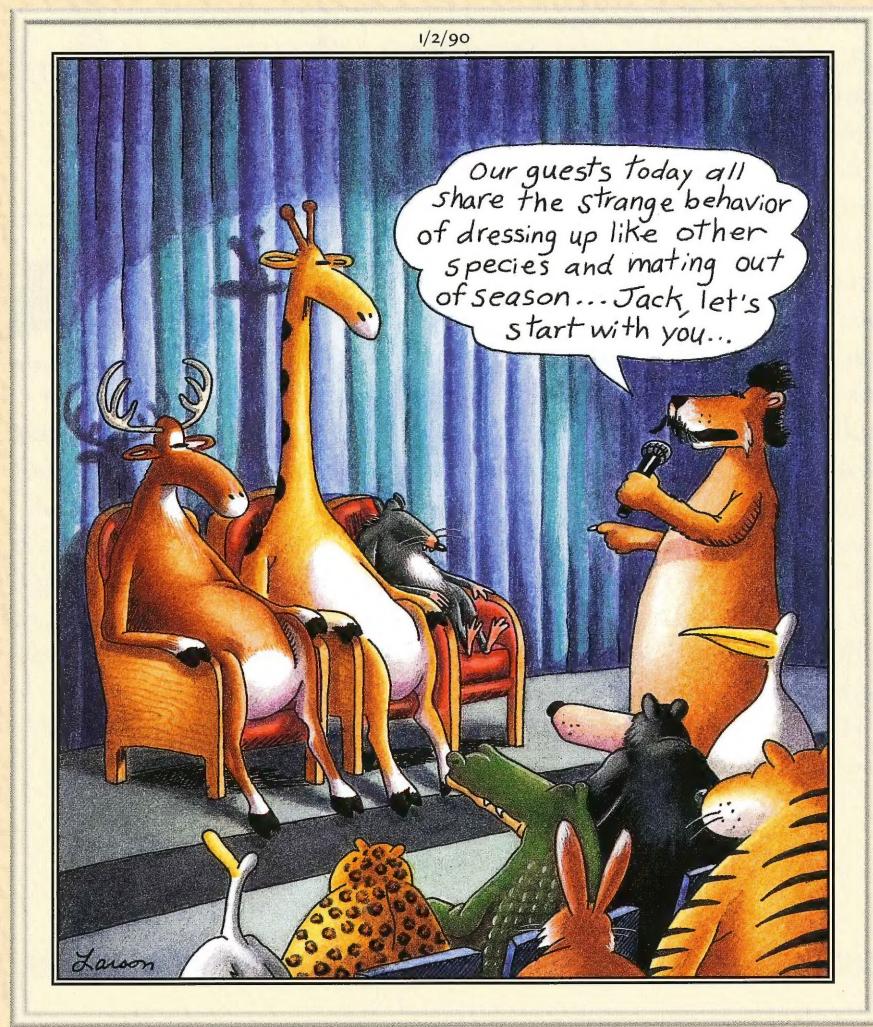




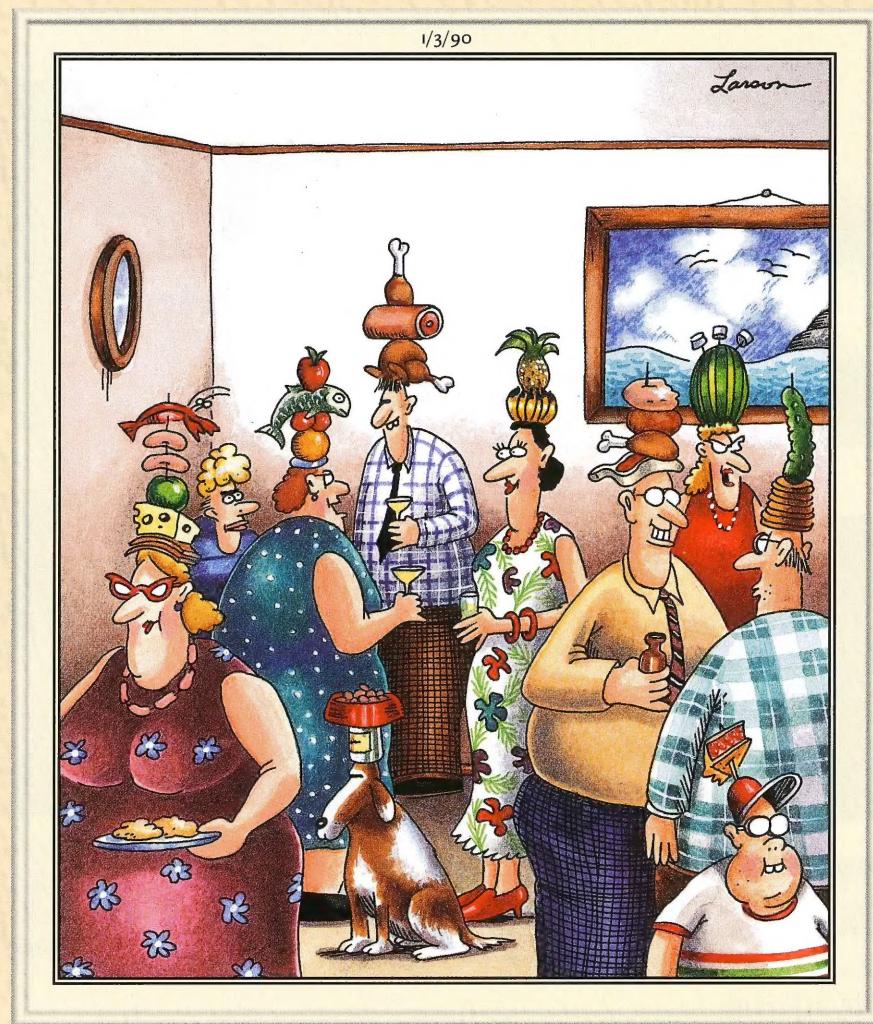
"You're so morbid, Jonathan—the paper comes, and that's the first section you always head for."



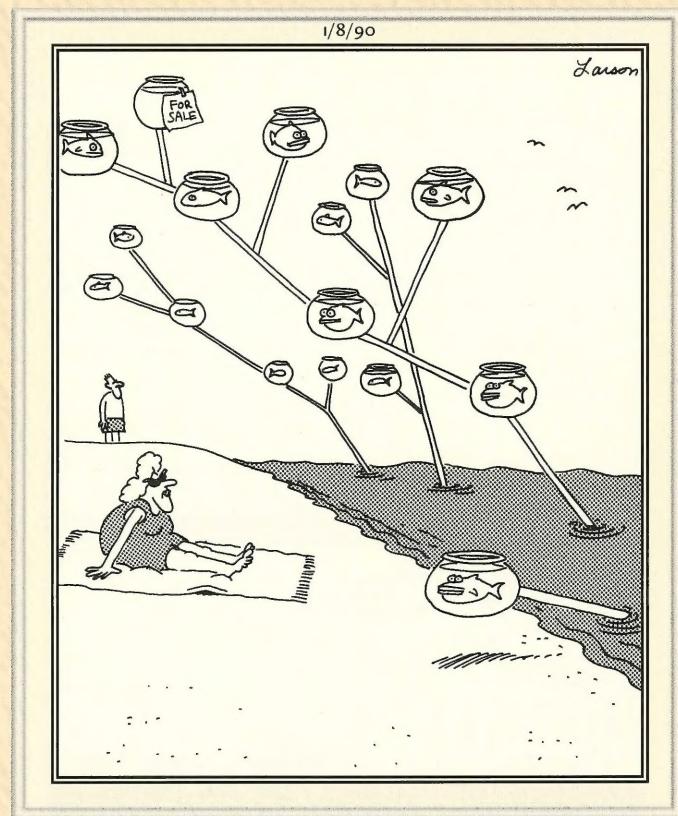
"Well, here we go again. ... Did anyone here *not* eat his or her homework on the way to school?"



Geraldo Rivera of the wild



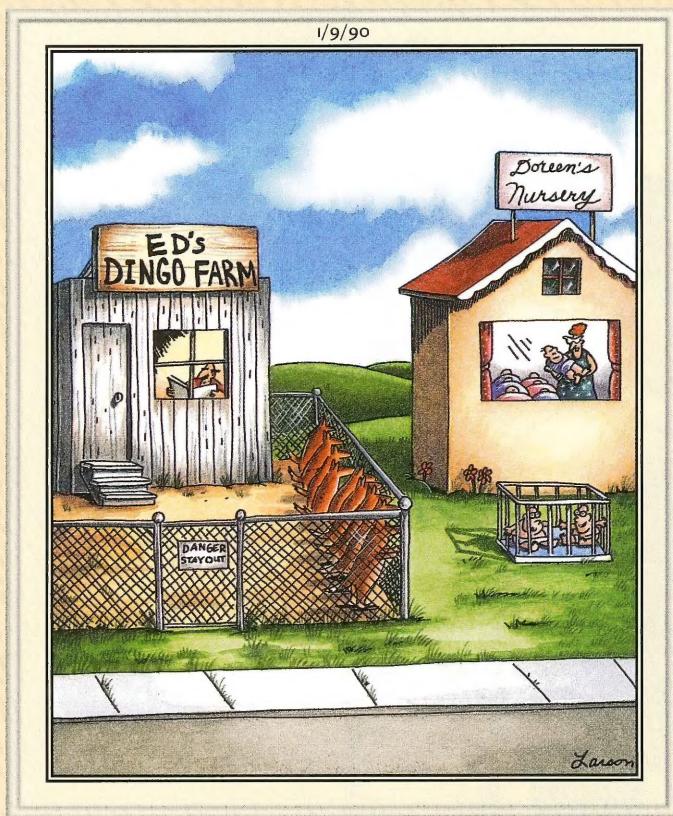
Carmen Miranda's family reunion



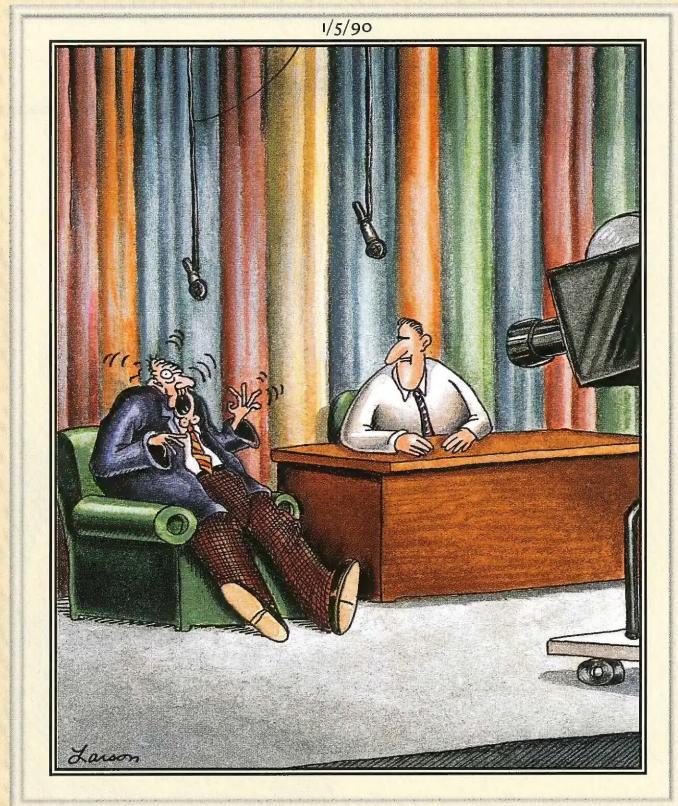
Encroachment of the fish developers



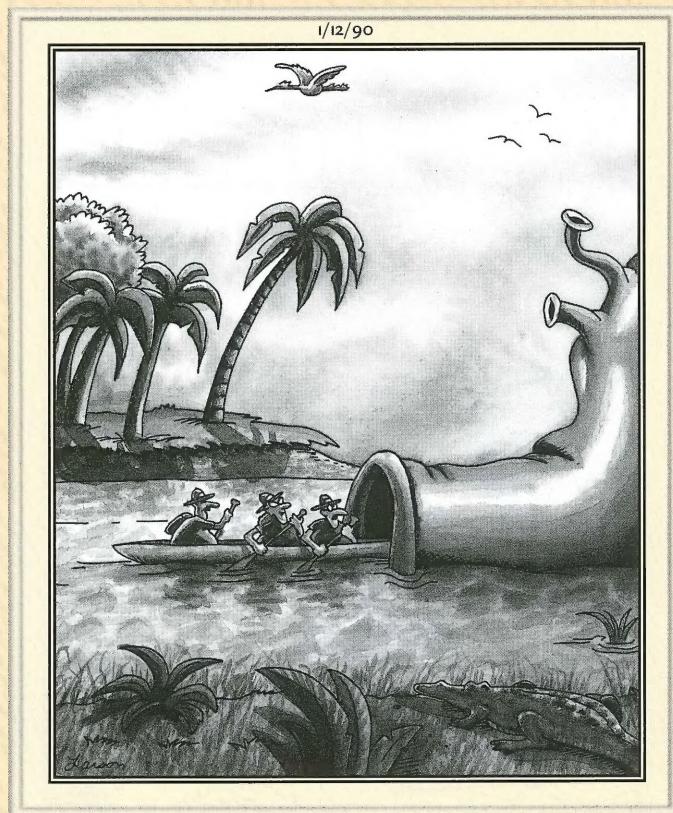
"Jimzffxy! Do you have to mess with the
organisms on every planet we visit?"



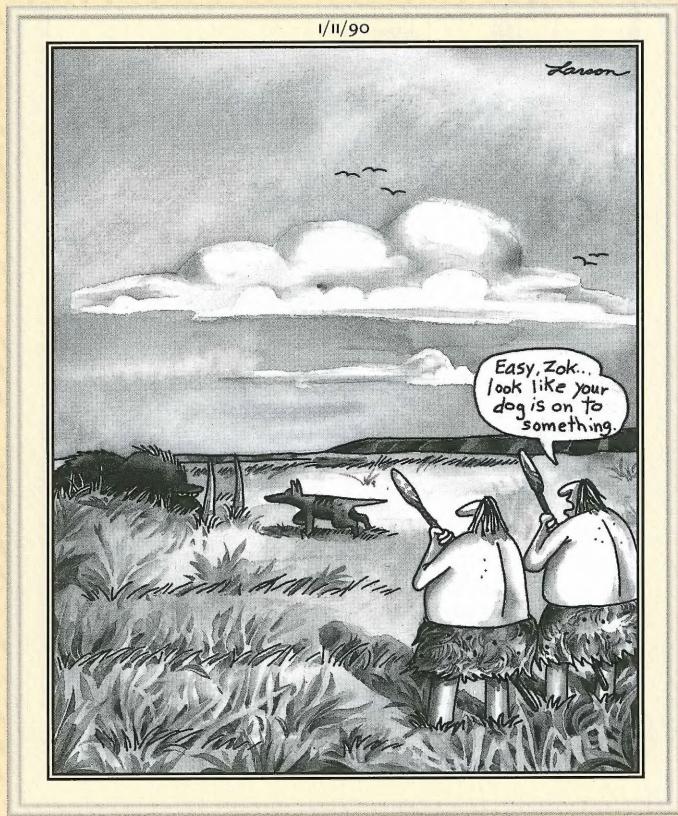
Trouble brewing



Suddenly, on a national talk show in front of millions of viewers, Dick Clark ages 200 years in 30 seconds.

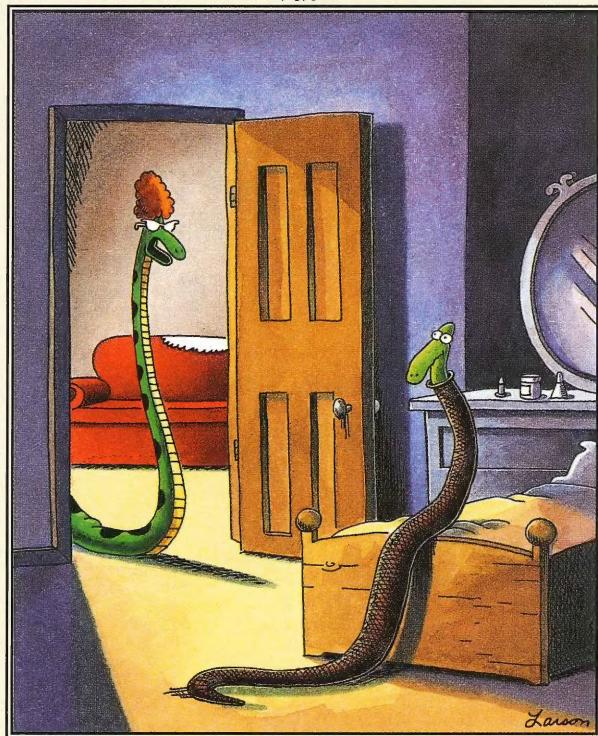


The heart of the jungle now well behind them, the three intrepid explorers entered the spleen.



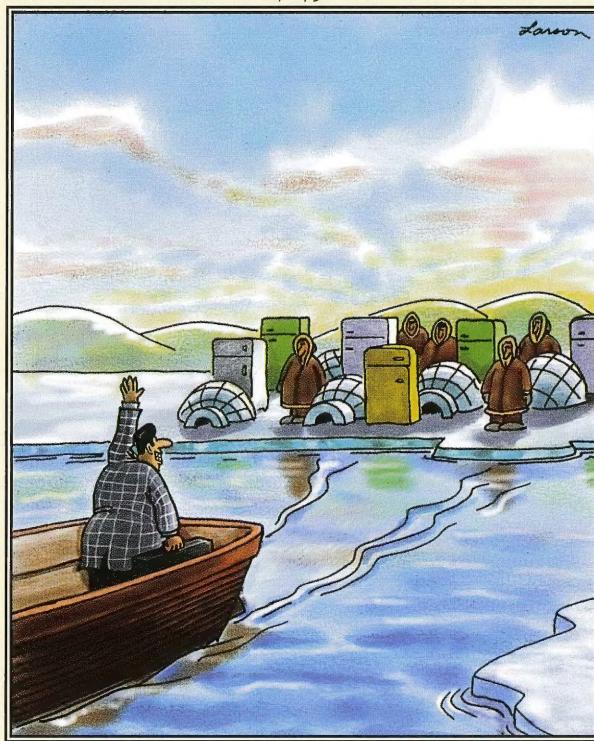
Mammoth pointers

1/15/90



"Oh my God, Bernie! You're wearing one of my nylons?"

1/22/90



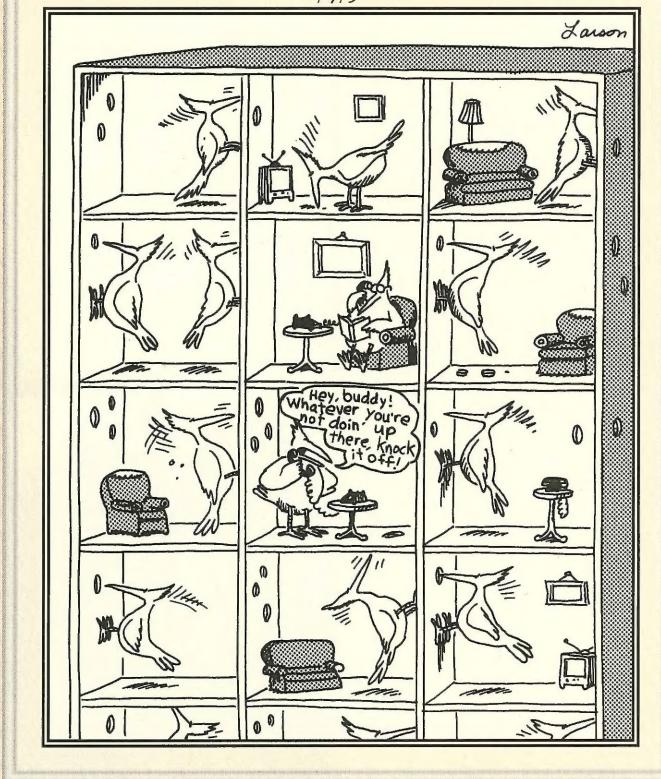
Ralph Harrison, king of salespersons

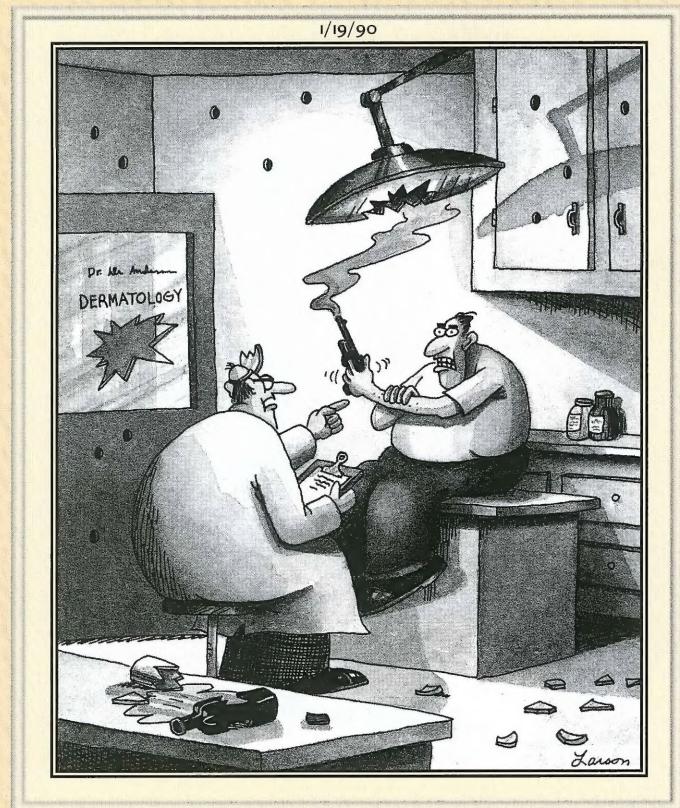
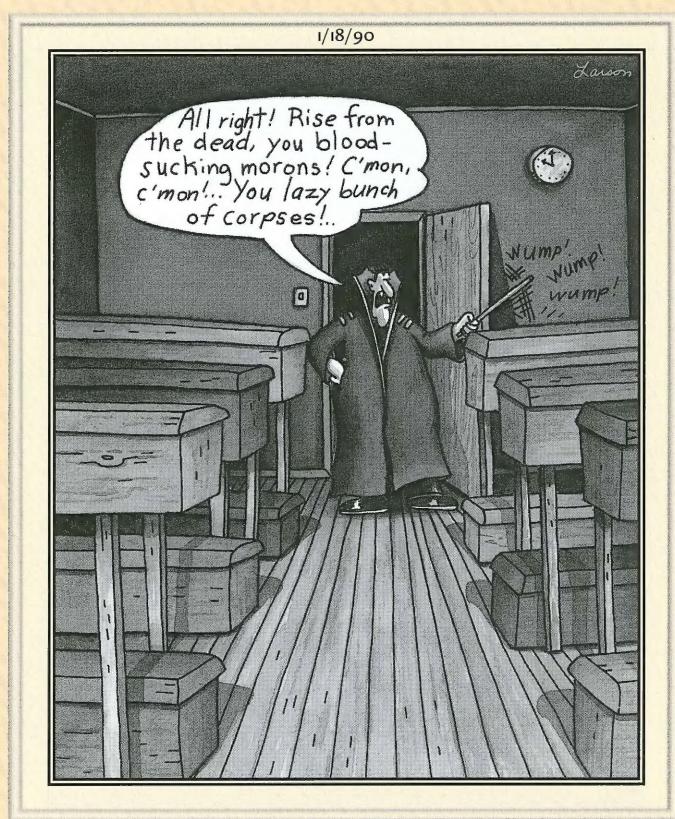
1/16/90



Scientific meat markets

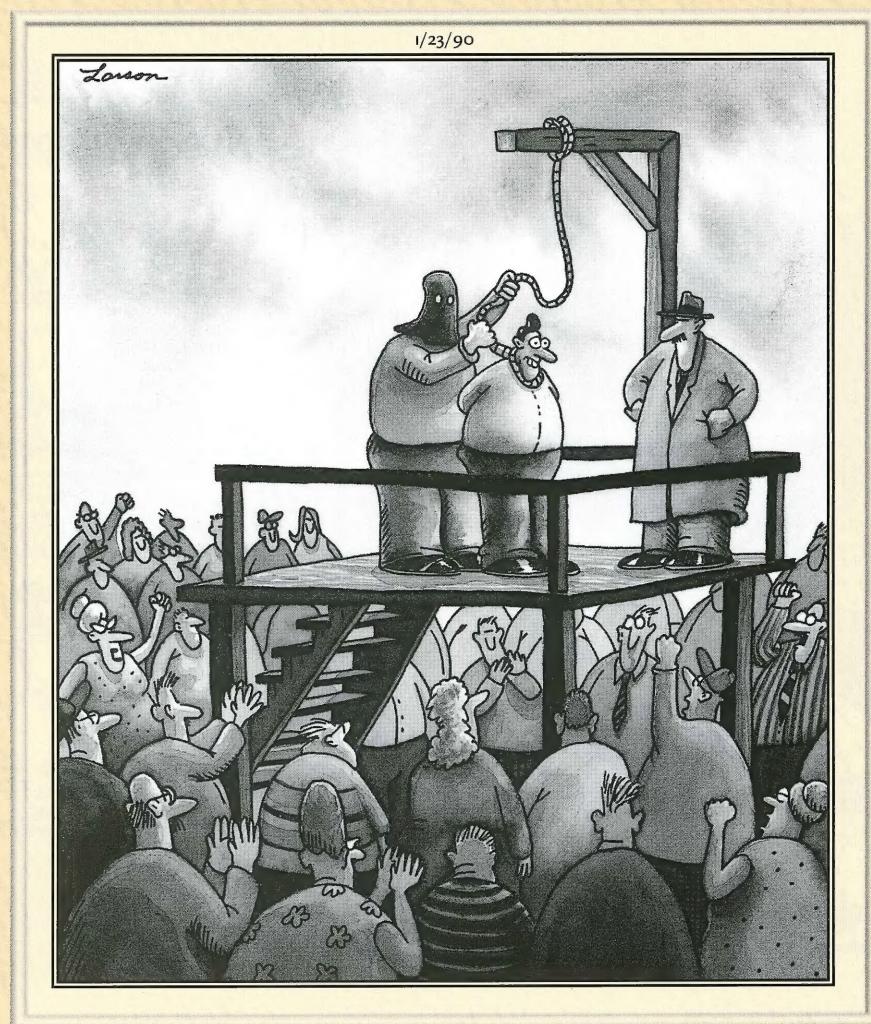
1/17/90





Sunset in the vampire army

"First of all, Mr. Hawkins, let's put the gun down. ... I would guess it's an itchy trigger finger, but I want to take a closer look."



At the public execution of the
"Ring around the collar" copywriter

January 1990

January 2, 1996

Dear Gary,

I am one of your more famous unknown admirers. Fact is, you made me famous - one of the most (in)famous copywriters of all time. Yup, the execution was botched, an c'est moi, the "Ring Wisk" around the collar" copywriter. And it's time to even the score.

My family and friends, long apprised of my dubious celebrity, have upbraided me for not demanding satisfaction. Well, no, uh, actually they just said I should get in touch with you. So here I am; unfortunately without my computer, and no spellcheck, so bear with me.

Anyhow, just to give you a little background on the man you so cavalierly prepared for hanging...

Back in the sixties, I worked at Lever Brothers in New York City as a Promotion Specialist. I created nuts-and-bolts kinds of stuff like point-of-purchase(POP) materials, contests, coupons, and the whole stinking mess of marketing crap. Meantime, a Big Name agency handled Lever's major campaigns.

I started my advertising career as an agency copywriter before going to Lever. My first real job after college was as a bona fide copywriter with what was back then the largest ad agency in the world, Interpublic. It broke-up because of the anti-trust sentiment that still had a say in those days. It became McCann-Erickson and a bunch of other topnotch agencies.

I was (at least to my own now hazy perception of those days) a hotshot at Lever, coming as I did from the "big one". Them were the days. I was in my early twenties, and just by youthful hubris and exuberance, if nothing else, more productive, and easily as creative, as the other three Promotion Specialists combined, seasoned veterans as they may have been.

Not too surprisingly, with certain individuals at Lever my brash, call-a-spade-a-spade attitude didn't sit well-[with] two Product Managers in particular, one on Wisk and the other on the Pepsodent account....

As coincidence had it, about five months before I resigned from Lever, the aforementioned managers pulled off a first time coup at Lever by becoming Co-presidents of the company.

Anyway, one day, midway in my stay at Lever, my buddy Preston Doby (we had become good friends during my time there. Doby's claim to fame, other than being an heck of an artist, was his uncle, Larry, who was the first black man to play on the other major league that didn't hire Jackie Robinson), brings me over a bottle of Wisk. On its neck is a mock-up in paper of a collar and tie.

"Come up with something to say on this collar."

Doby had already drawn some blotches on the tie representing stains. Almost immediately I flashed on the idea of a dirty collar, and sing-songed, "Ring around the collar, we're out to get your dollar." I did it to the tune of that old childhood ditty from the days of the black plague:

Ring around the rosey, pocket full of possey. all fall down.

Doby responded that that wasn't exactly a product benefit, so I hit him with, "Wisk around the collar beats ring around the collar every time." And that was it.

He finished the mock-up, and I brought it to the Product Manager. Barging into his office because the door was open, I didn't notice the 'suits' on the sofa in the rear.

"What do you think of this for a POP promo?"

He gave it a thoughtful half second appraisal, and said he didn't like it. Meanwhile, as I began my last ditch appeal to sell him on it, the two guys I hadn't noticed who happened to be agency Account Execs sidled up beside me. One reached for the mock-up saying, "Hey, this isn't a bad idea!"

"We could take this little idea, and run it into a national campaign. I like it."

And that's the story. The epilogue is that this Product Manager in part for his brilliant Wisk campaign strategy and the other [guy] on Pepsodent became Co-presidents. Some of my friends in higher places at Lever told me that just about their first official act as Co-presidents was a decision to give me six months notice.

Nowadays, I'm an holistic bodywork therapist, and it's the best thing I've ever done. I'll give you a freebee if we ever cross paths. I also do a little freelance writing. I won't go so far as to say you owe me, but please write me something or call me. I'm the one that was wrunged and I'm practically begging. It would make my kids real happy.

Forgivingly,



Dear Ray:

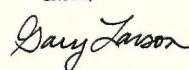
Even as I sat at my drafting table so many moons ago and drew the cartoon to which you refer, I remember thinking, "Man, I hope I don't hear from this person." And after a pause of several seconds, I thought, "No way."

And now here you are. Like the Ghost of Far Side Past.

Your letter was very enjoyable, and read like some kind of "whodunit" in the advertising world. And that Wisk commercial, when all's said and done, must have ultimately been very successful for your client -- or they wouldn't have kept driving it into our skulls for so many years.

Thanks for writing, and I'm glad to hear about your career change. (I was going to say something about how wonderful it is that you're no longer coming up with ways to irritate millions of people, and then I realized one might make that same comment about me.)

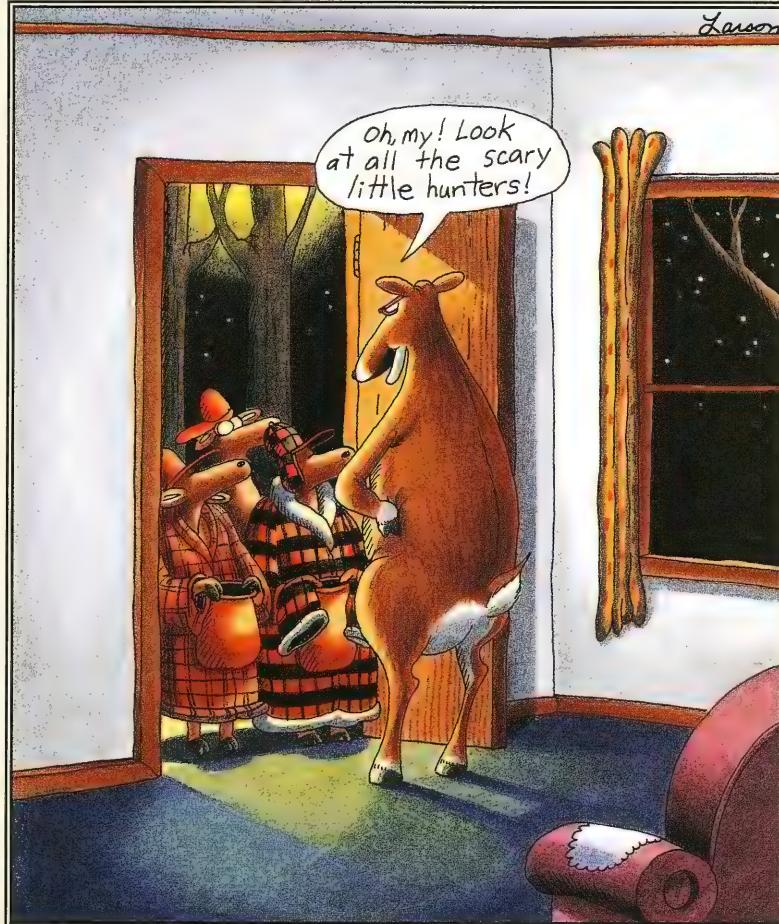
Cheers,



Gary Larson

FarWorks, Inc.

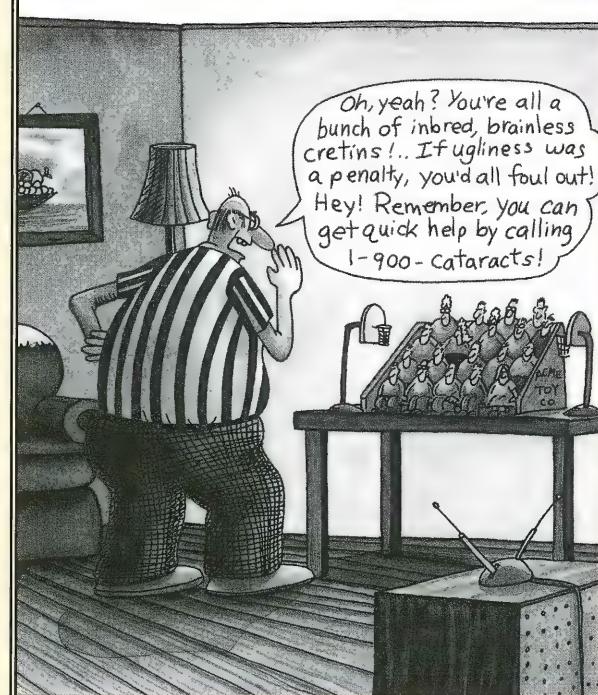
1/30/90



Deer Halloweens

1/24/90

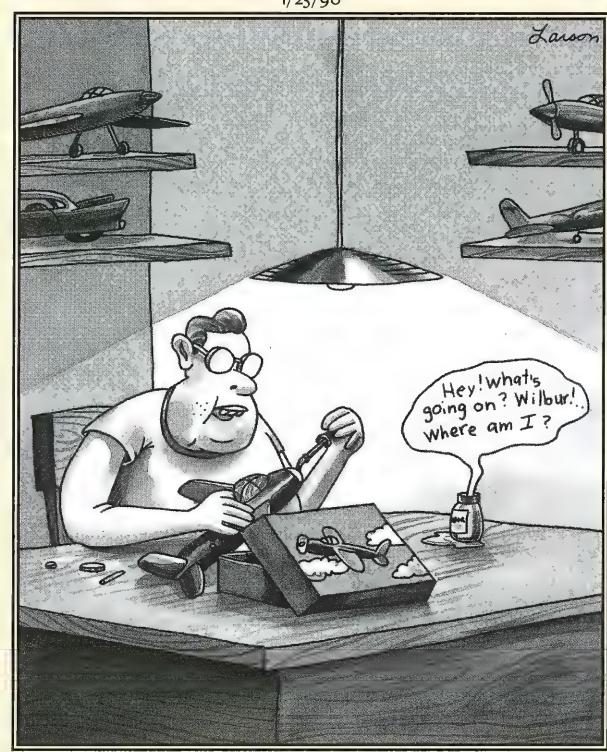
Larson



When referees go home at night

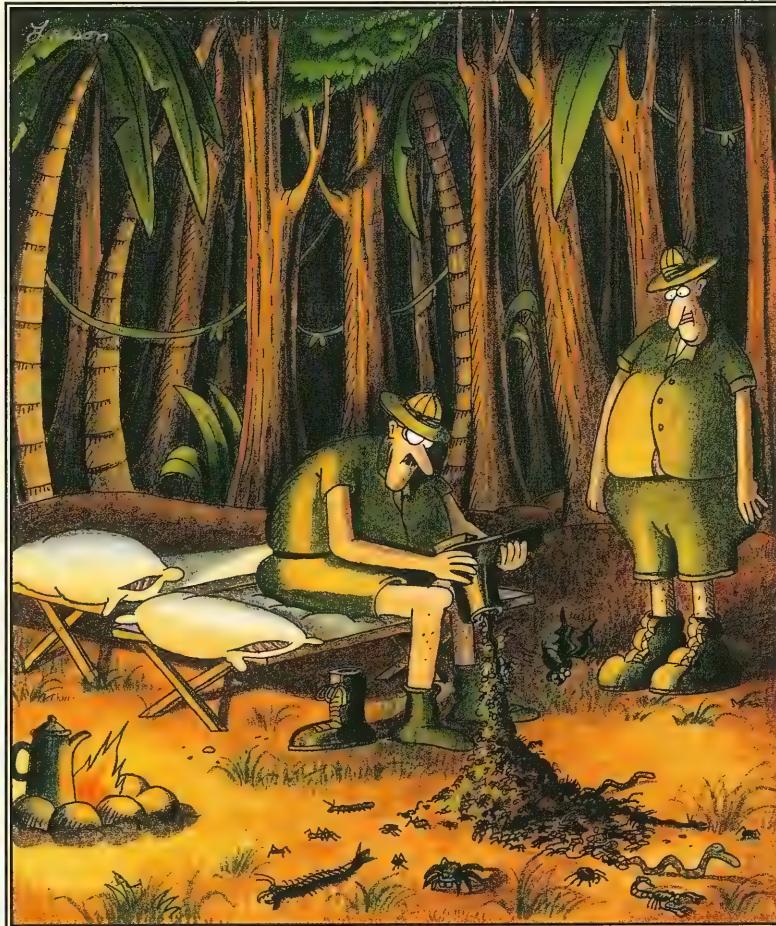
1/25/90

Larson



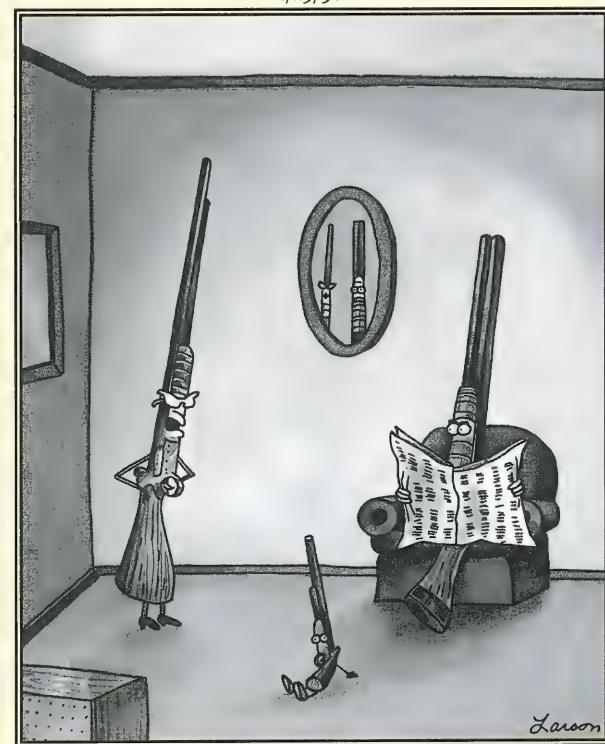
Jimmy meets Mr. Ed.

1/31/90



To his horror, Irving suddenly realized he had failed to check his own boots before putting them on just minutes ago.

1/29/90



"I'm going off half-cocked? I'm going off half-cocked? ... Well, Mother was right— you can't argue with a shotgun."

1/26/90



Water buffaloes at home

2/2/90



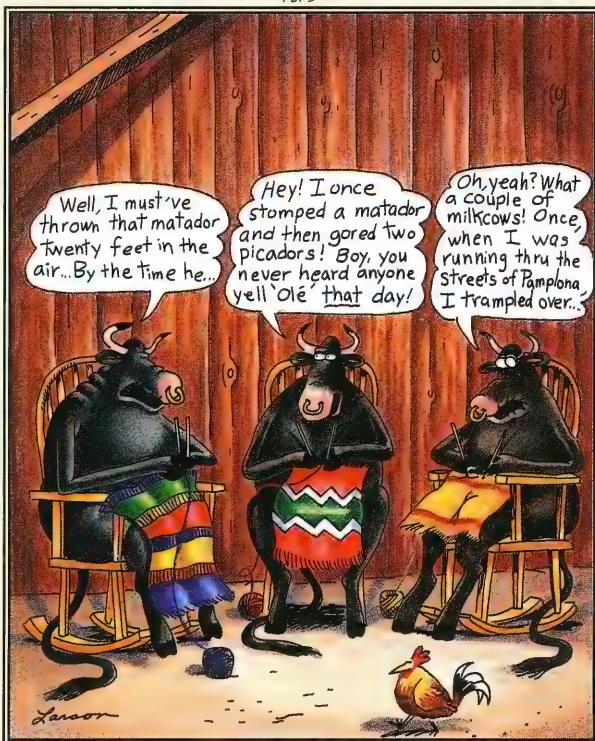
Suddenly, second-chair granite rock's jealousy of first-chair granite rock becomes uncontainable.

2/1/90



Morning in the crypt

2/5/90

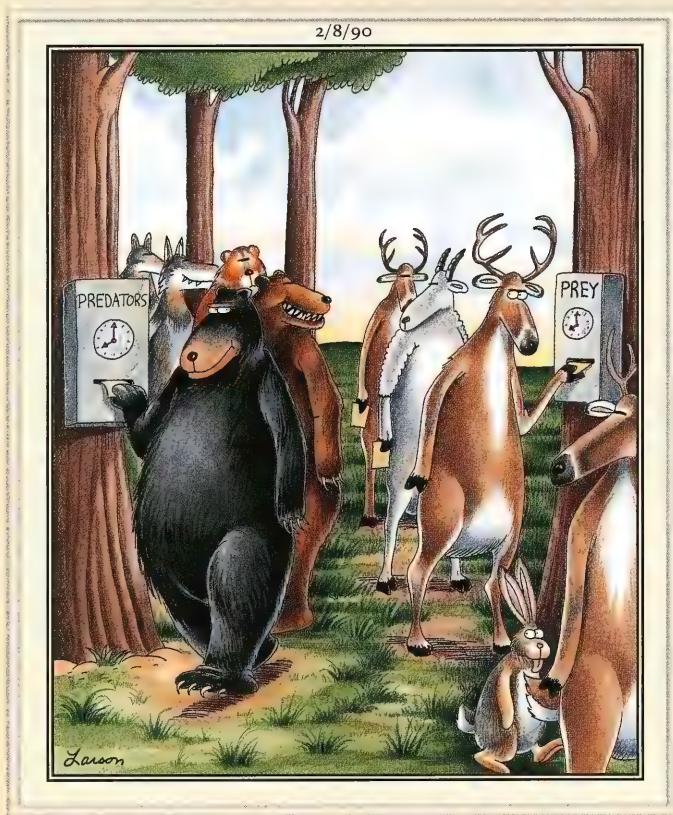


Bullknitters

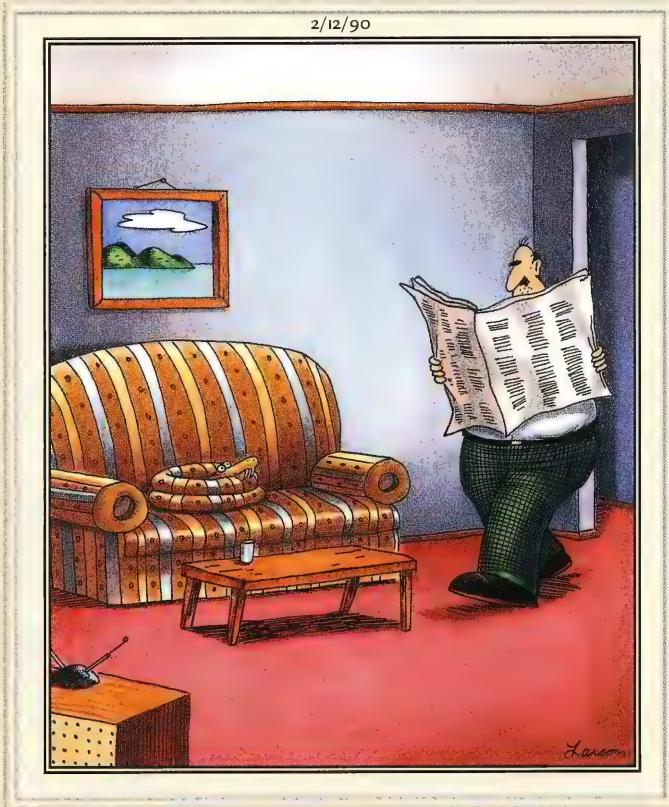
2/7/90



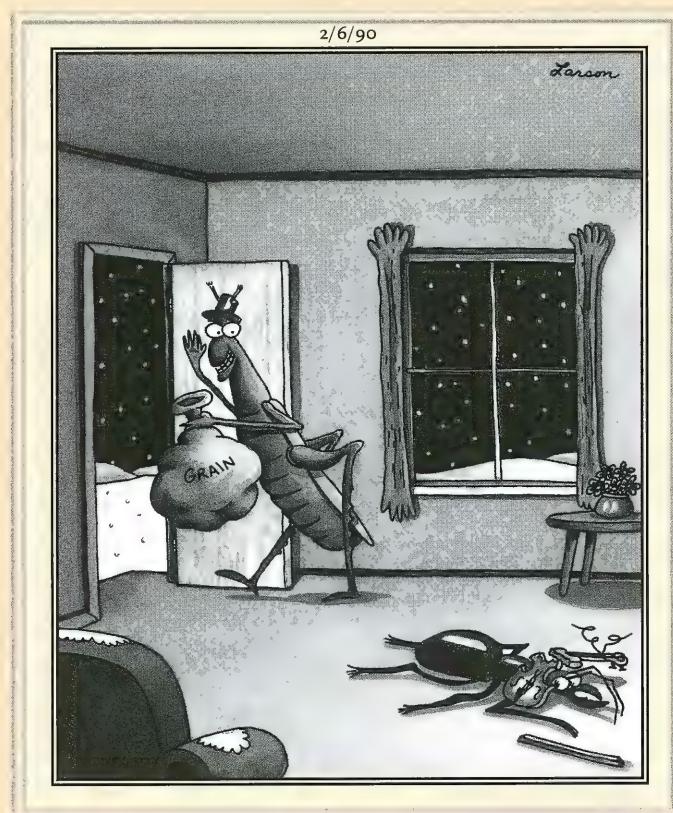
The parenting advantages of dentists



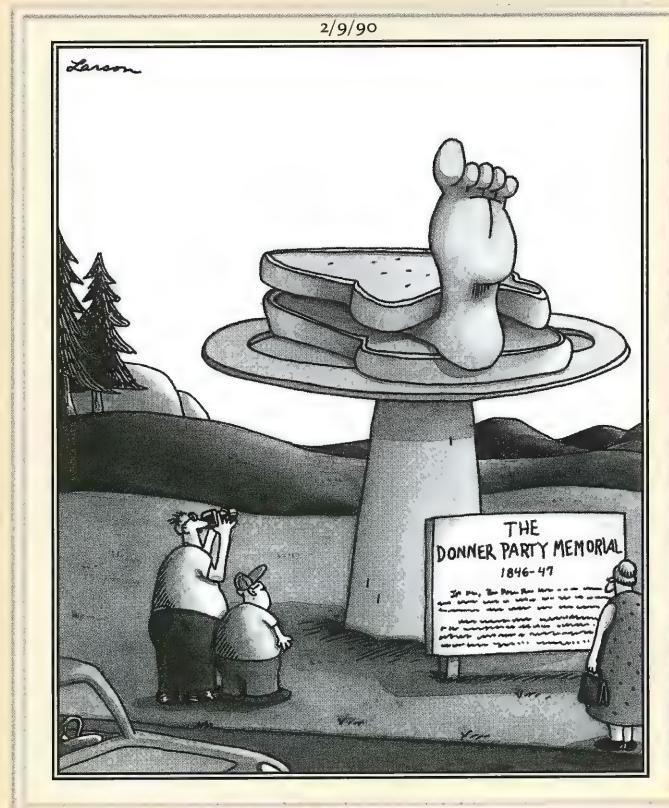
Wildlife day shifts

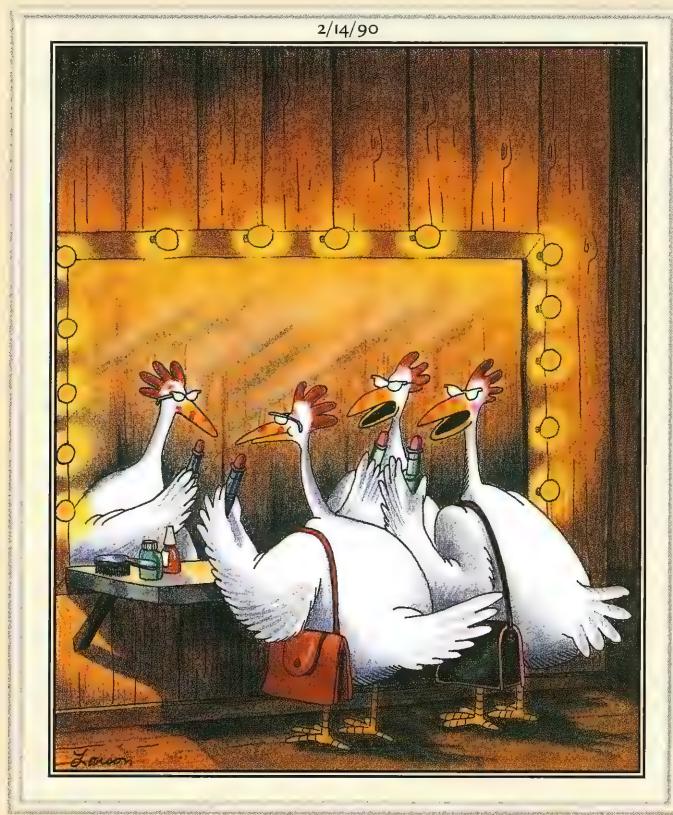


The deadly couch cobra—coiled and alert in its natural habitat.

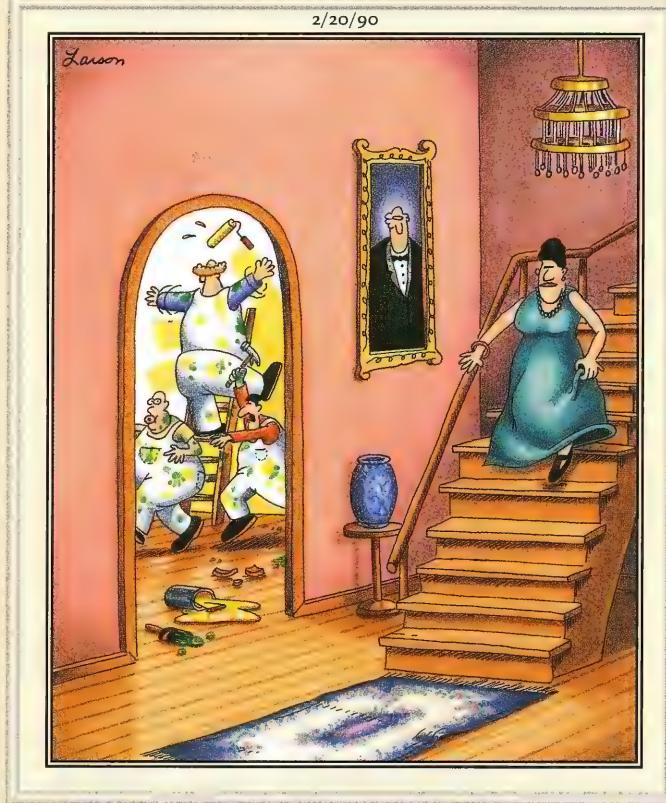


The untold ending to the fable,
"The Grasshopper and the Ant."

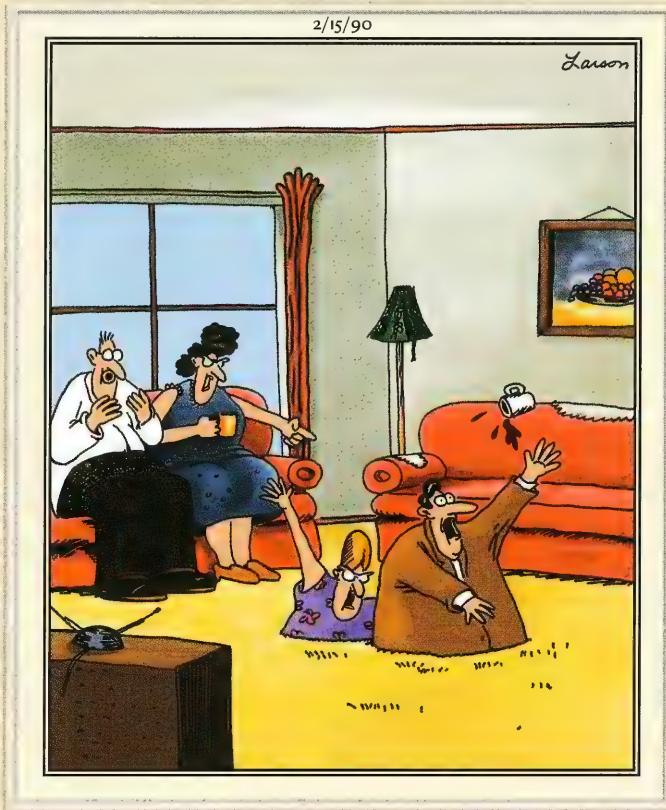
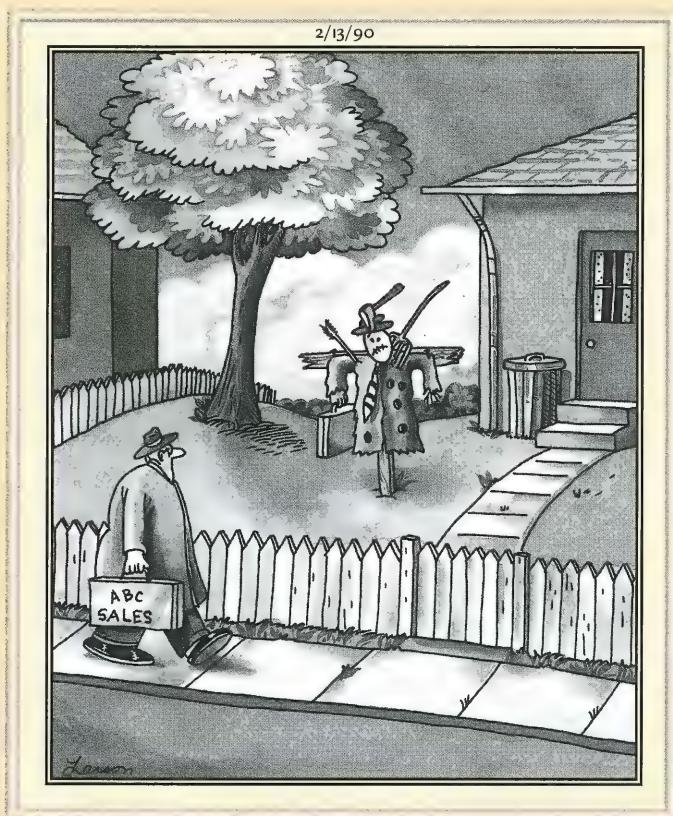




"This is no use, Wanda. It's like they say—
we just don't have lips."

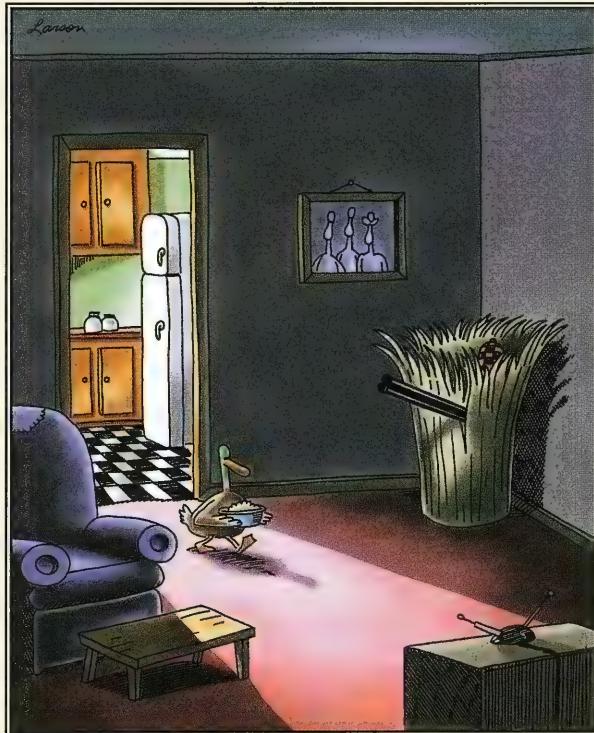


Our protagonist is about to check on the
progress of her remodelers in this scene from
Leona Helmsley Meets the Three Stooges.



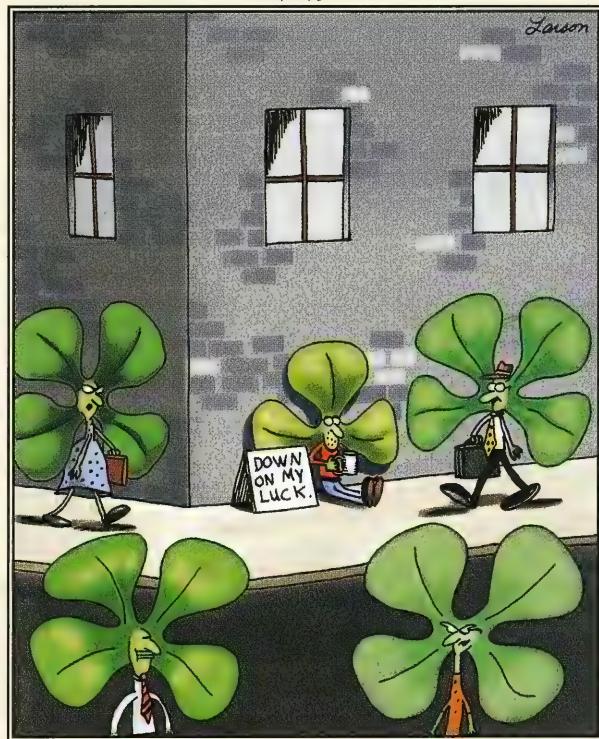
And down they went: Bob and Francine—two
more victims of the La Brea Carpets.

2/21/90



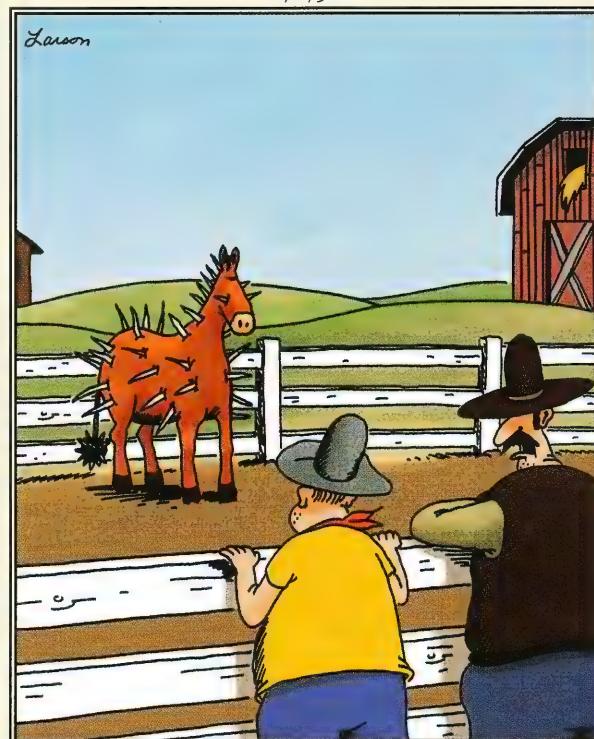
It was very late, and Raymond, fighting insomnia, went for a midnight snack. Unfortunately, he never saw the duck blind.

2/26/90



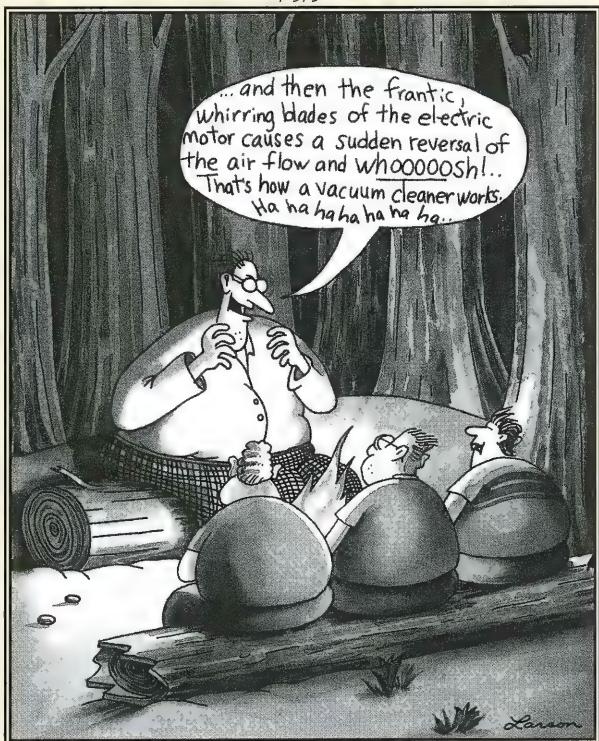
Life among the clover

2/16/90

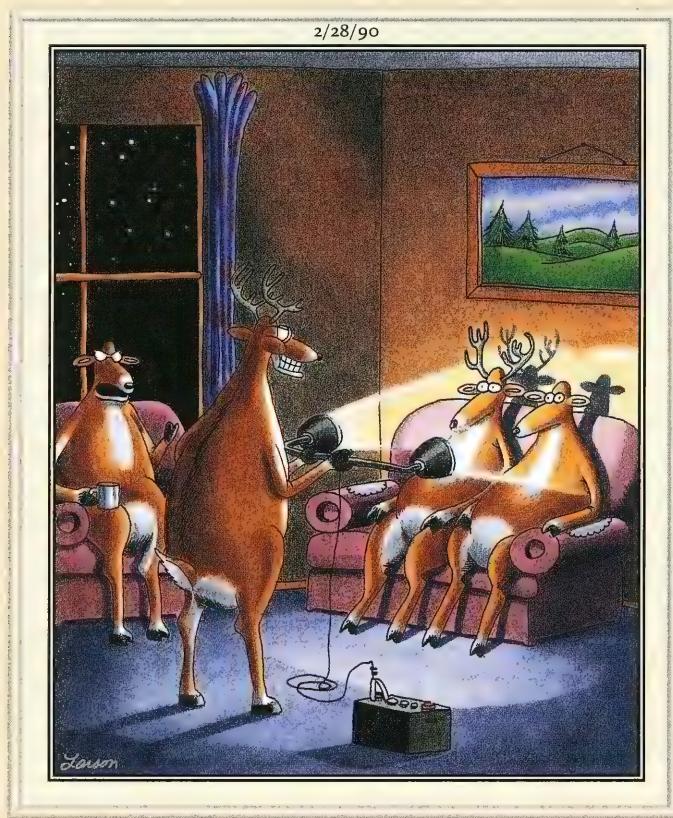


"Well, there he is, Billy—Big Red. Sure he's tough, but if you can ride him, he's yours."

2/19/90



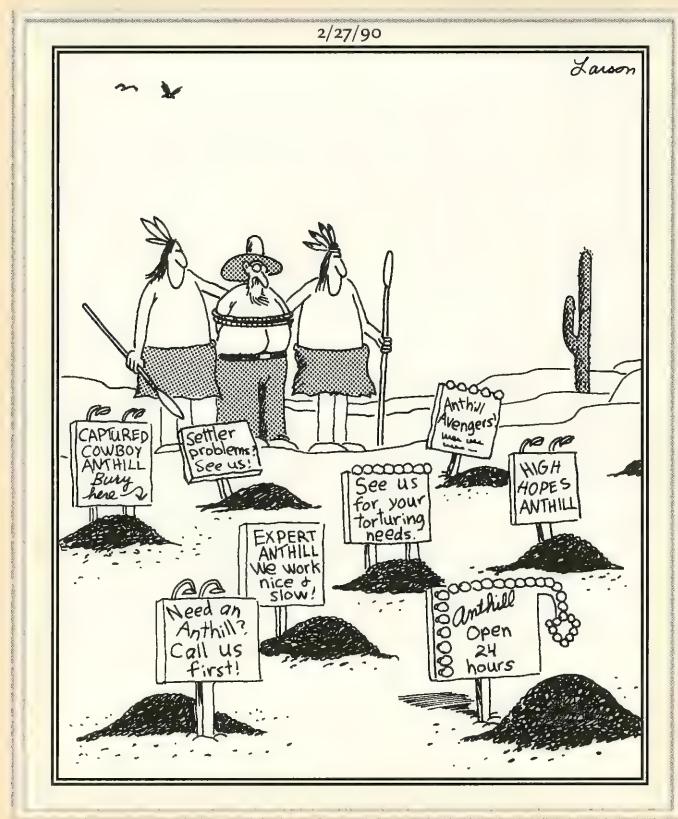
Tales of the Known



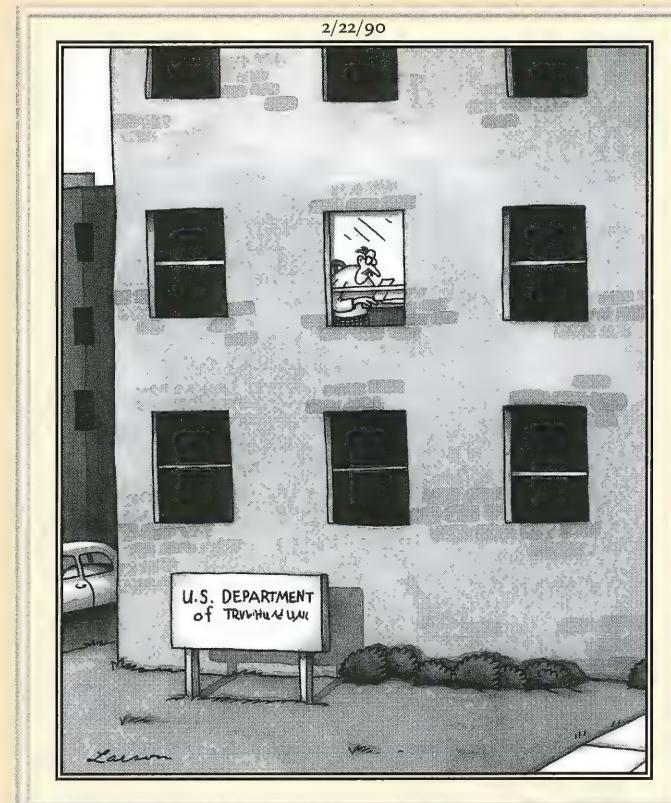
"Okay, Frank, that's enough.
I'm sure the Jeffersons are quite amazed
at your car headlight device."



"Oooweee! You nailed him good, Vera—to
think that little ol' ant was hoping to just up
and walk off with your rubber tree plant."

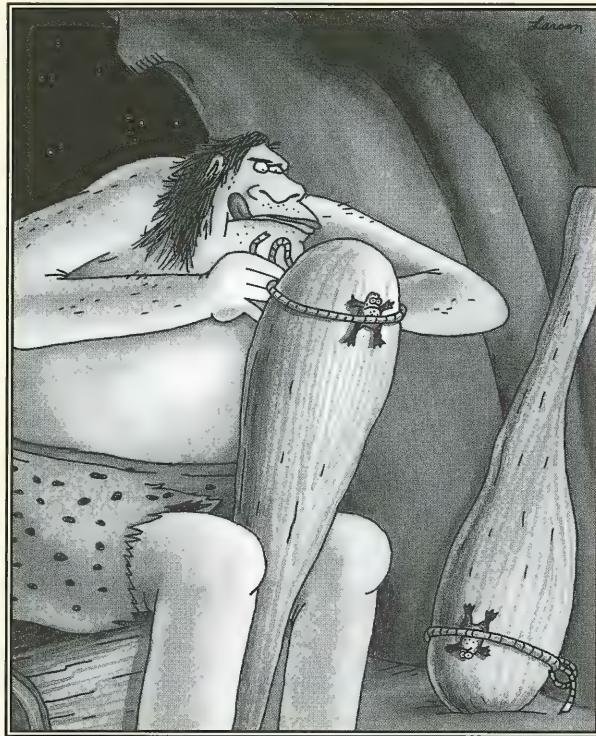


Competition in Nature



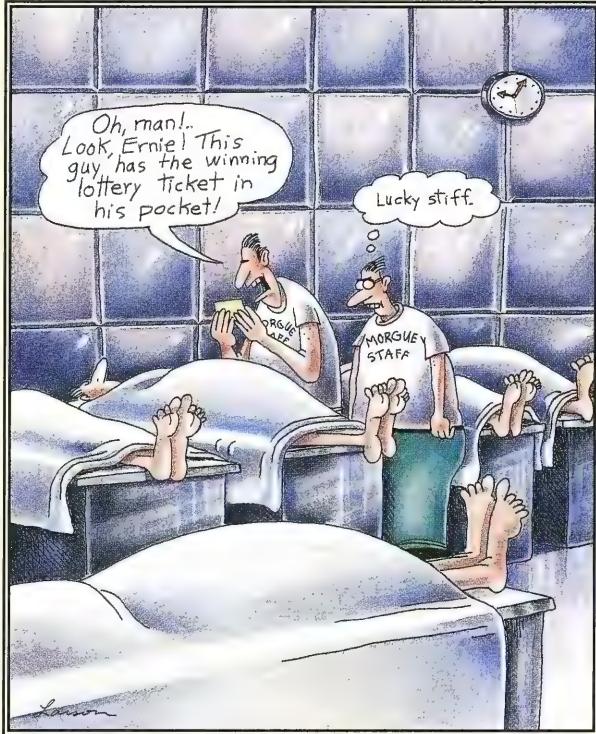
Civil Service History: On Oct. 12, 1979
(Columbus Day), government employee
George Sullivan goes in to work for a couple
of hours to, in his own words, "take care of
some unfinished business."

3/12/90

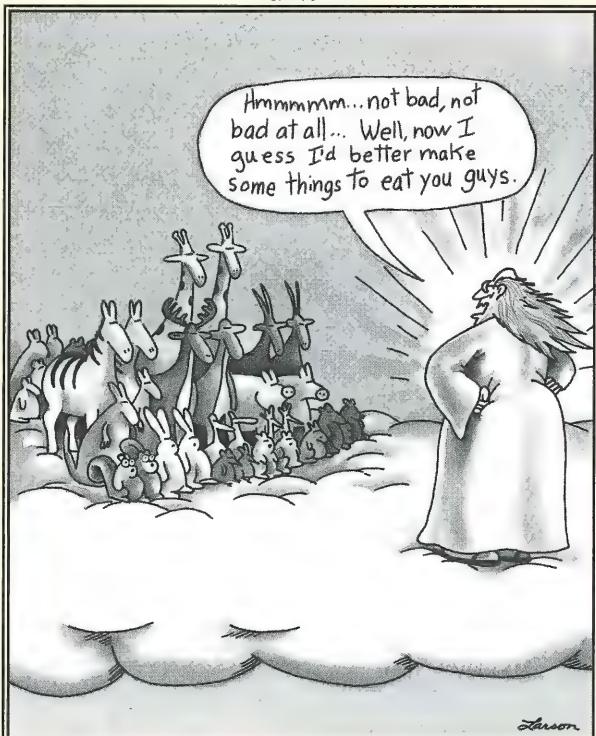


The night before the hunt, Neanderthals would carefully prepare their weaponry—often employing the help of the deadly poison-club frog.

3/5/90

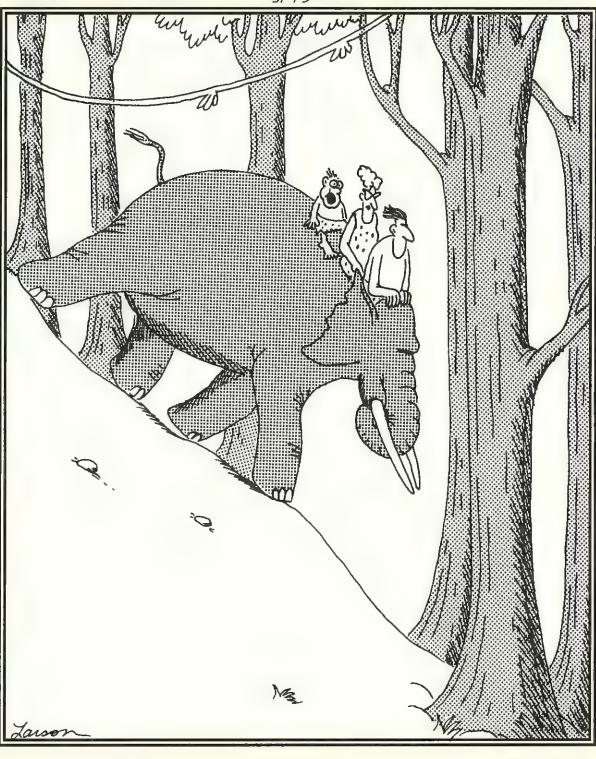


3/16/90

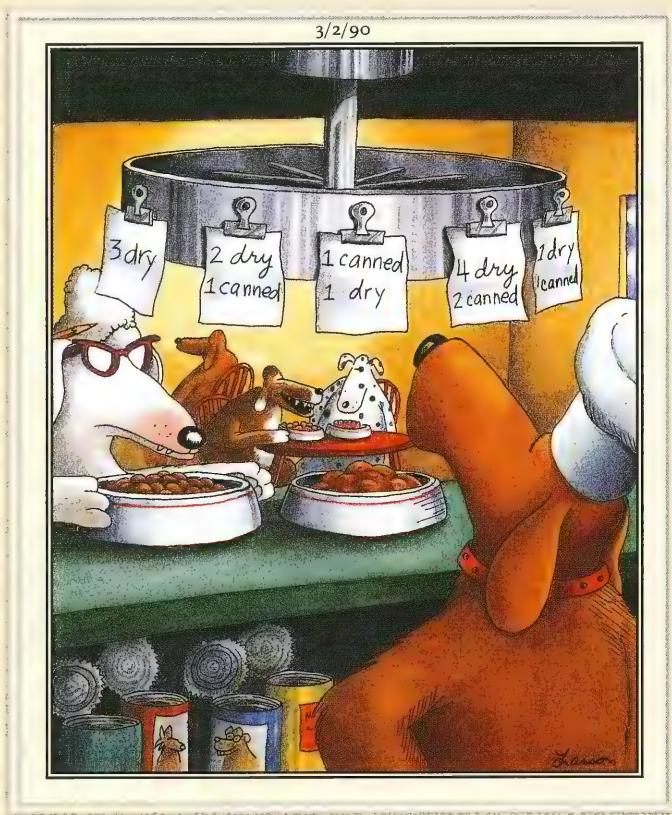


God creates the animals.

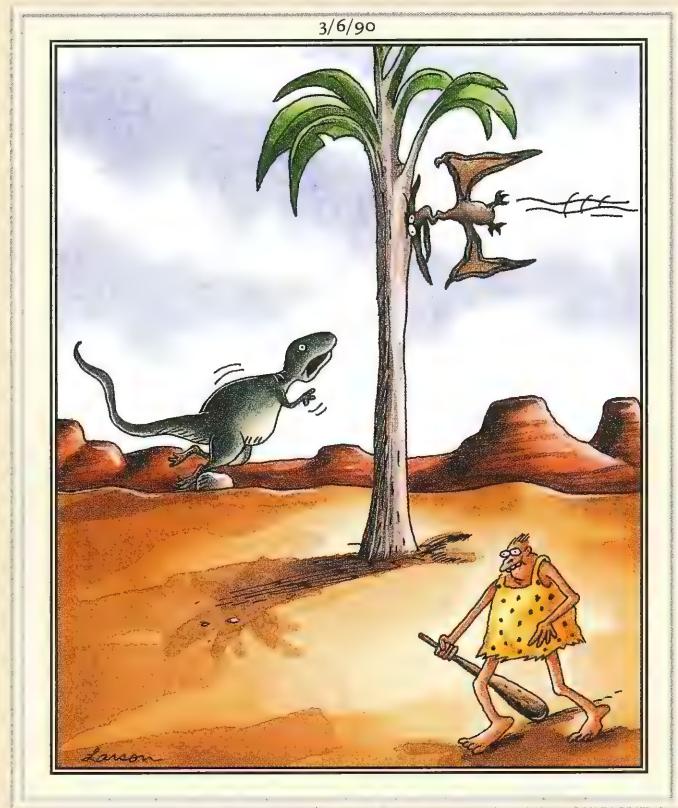
3/1/90



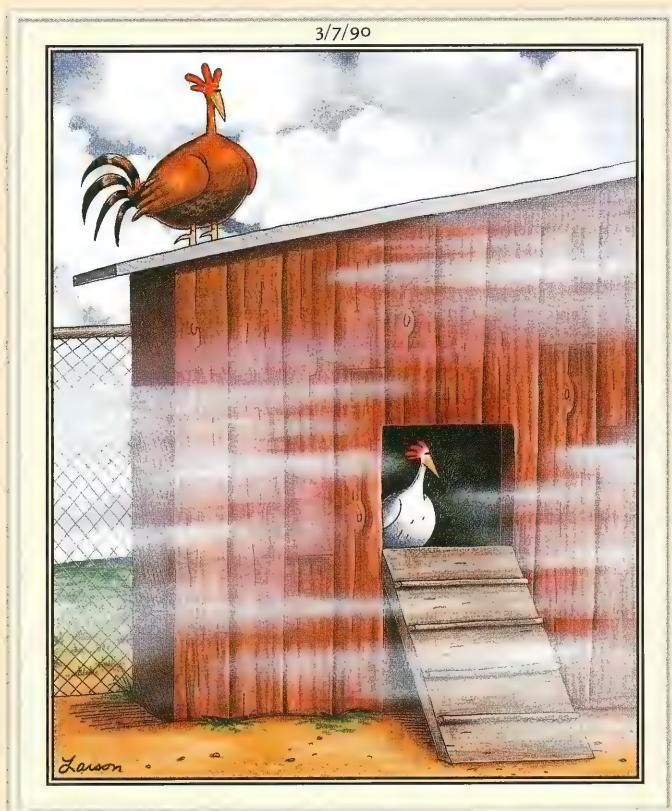
"Coast, Dad, coast!"



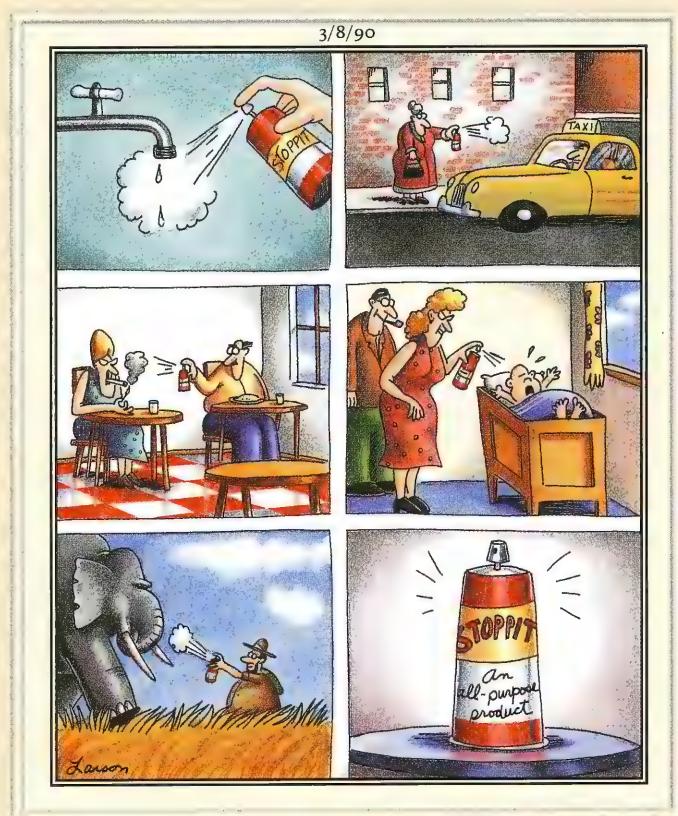
Dog restaurants



Although it lasted only 2 million years, the Awkward Age was considered a hazardous time for most species.



The rooster stared back at me, his power and confidence almost overwhelming. Down below, a female paused warily at the coop's entrance. I kept the camera running. They were beautiful, these *Chickens in the Mist*.

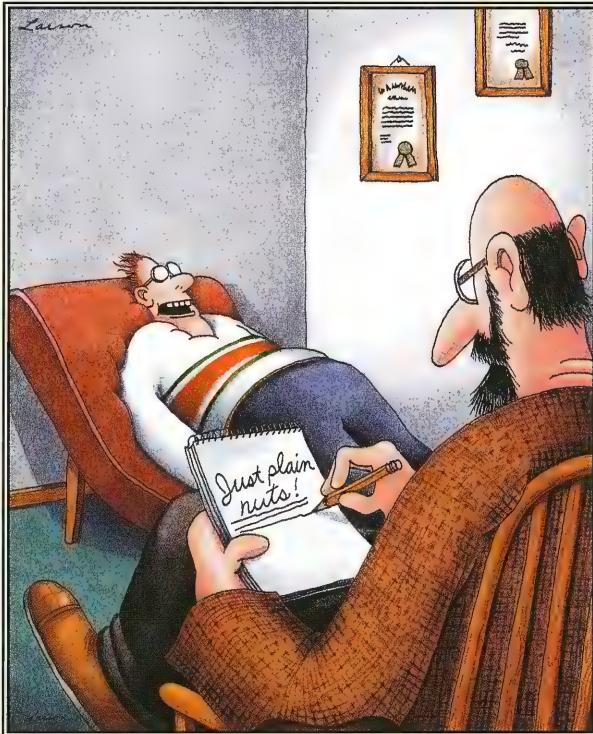


3/9/90

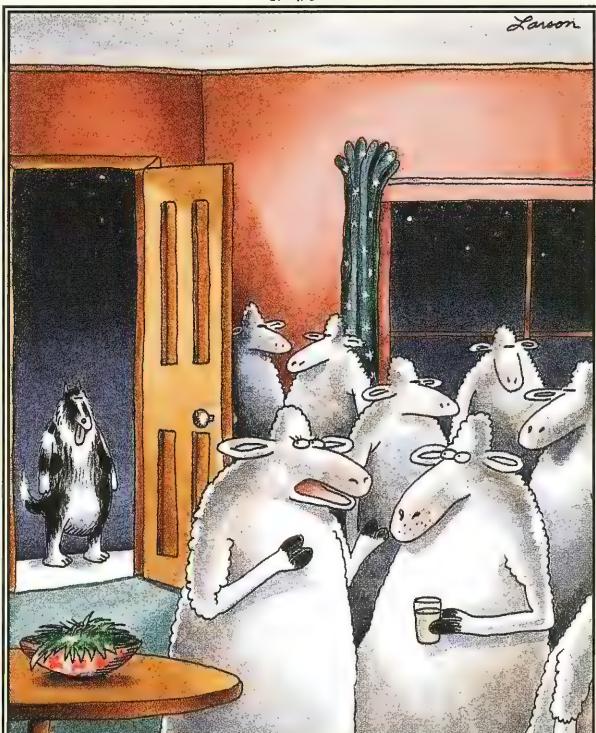


"It's a fax from your dog, Mr. Dansworth.
It looks like your cat."

3/13/90

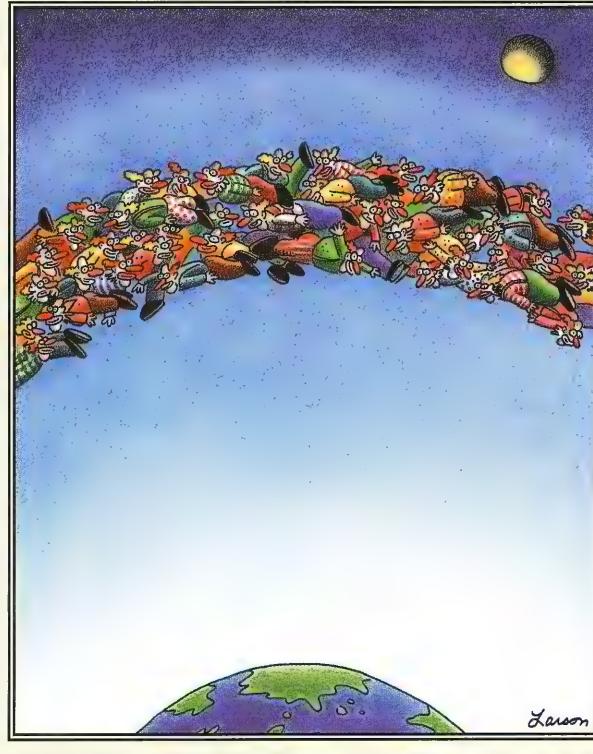


3/14/90



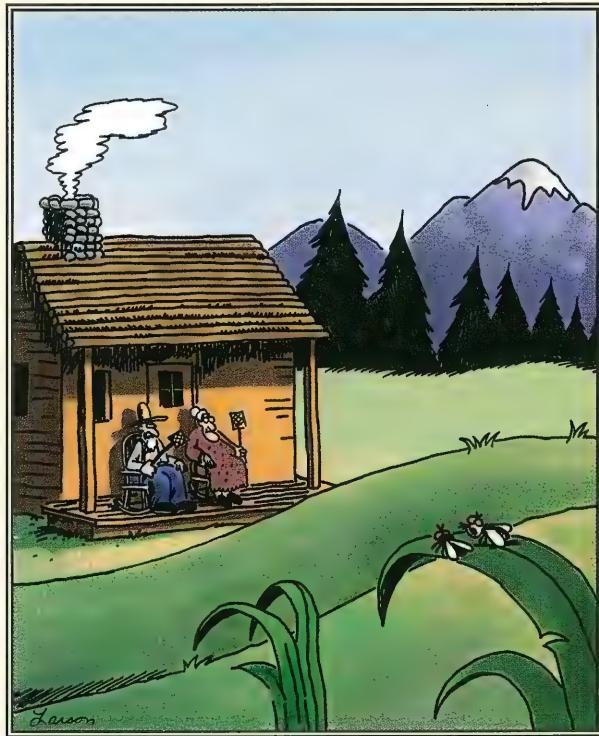
"Henry! Our party's total chaos! No one
knows when to eat, where to stand, what to ...
Oh, thank God! Here comes a Border collie!"

3/15/90



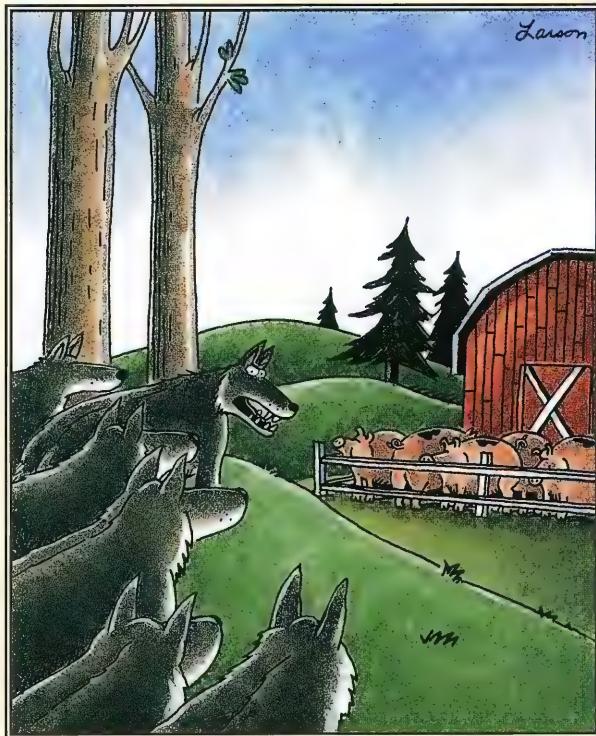
The bozone layer: shielding the rest of the solar
system from the Earth's harmful effects.

3/20/90



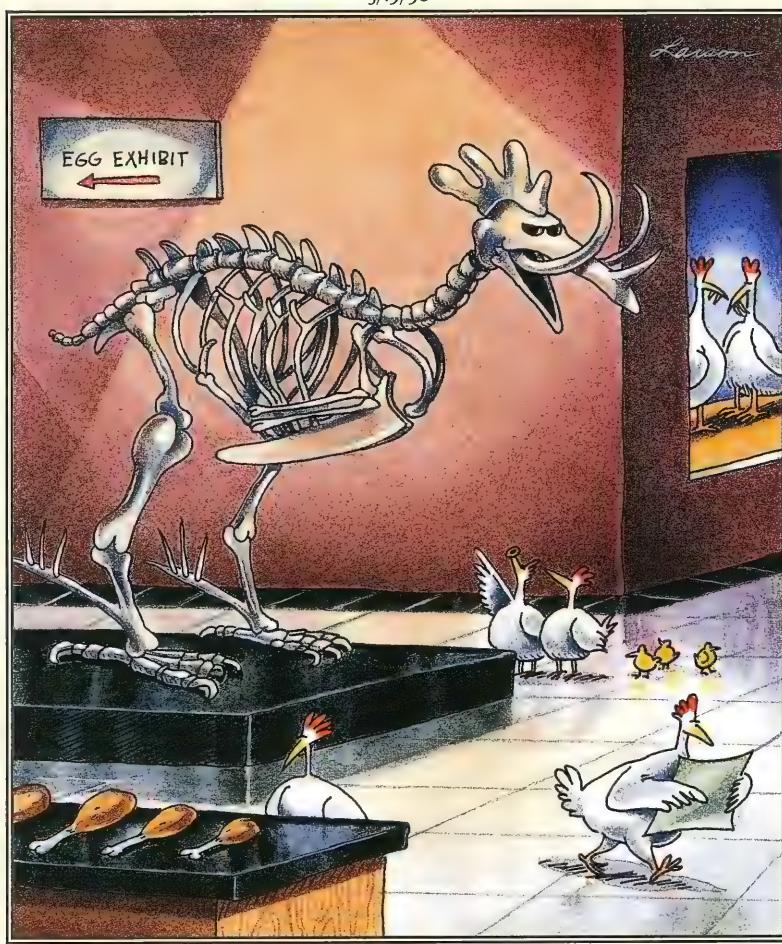
"Dang! Every day, more and more swatters
are movin' in."

3/21/90

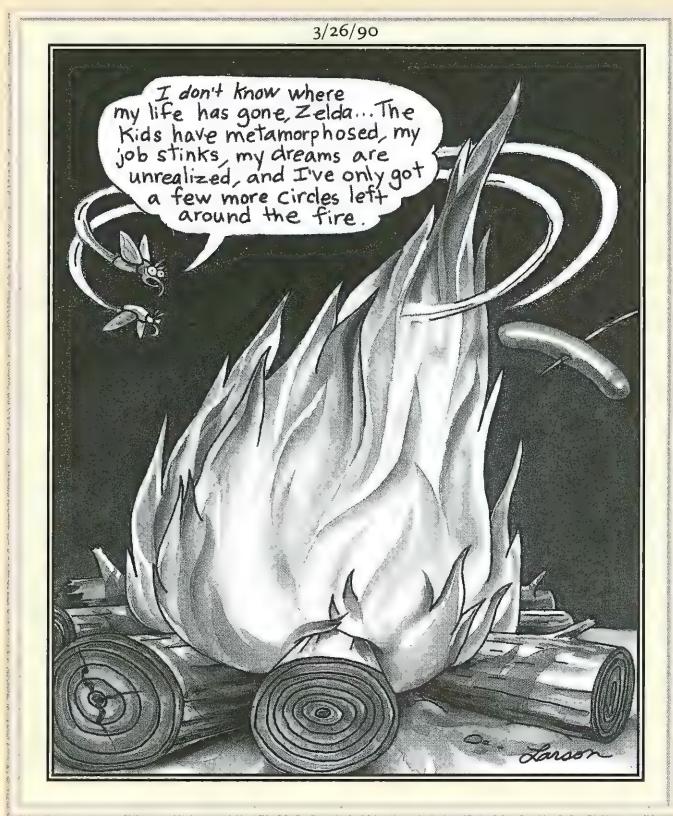


"I say we do it ... and trichinosis be damned!"

3/19/90



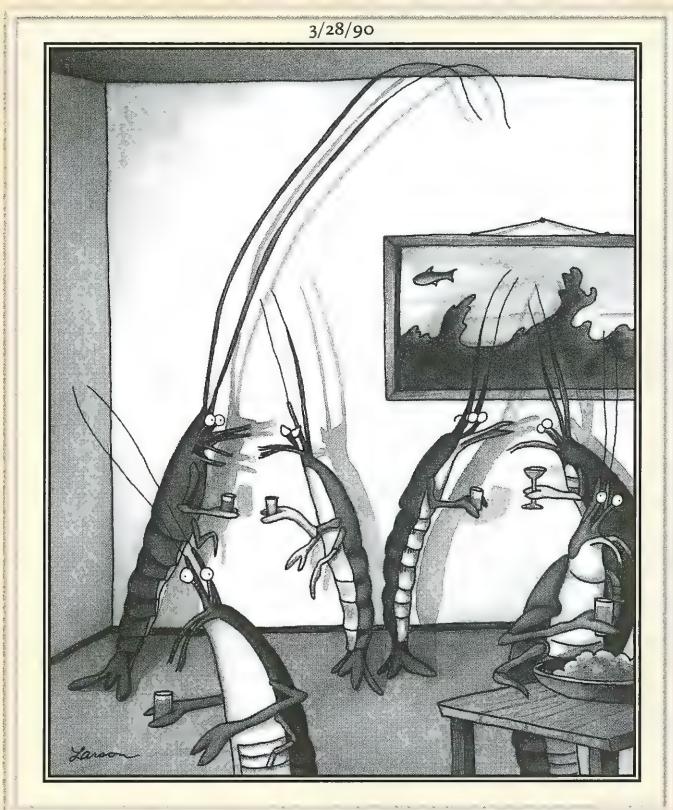
In the Chicken Museum



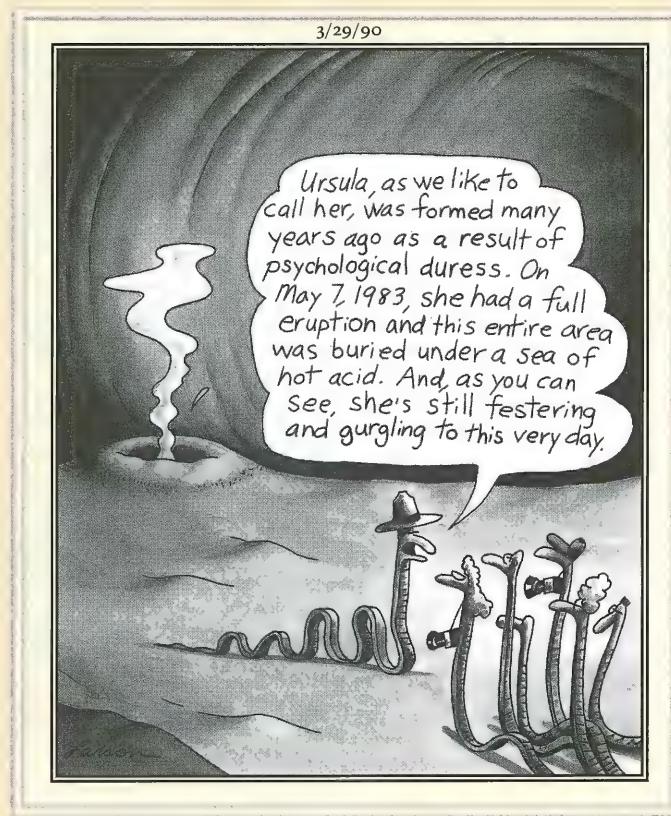
Midlife crises in moths



"Oh, I don't know. Billy's been having trouble in school, and Sally's always having some sort of crisis. I tell you, Edith, it's not easy raising the dead."

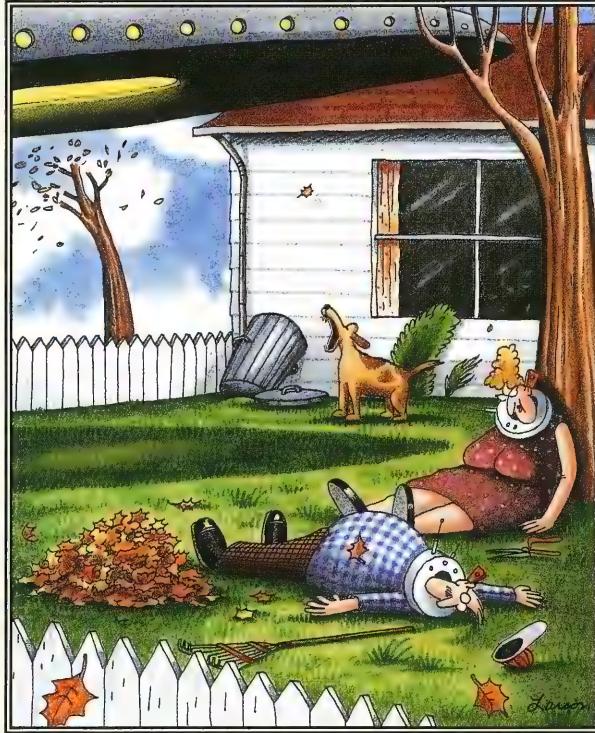


"Listen, you want to come over to my place?
I get great FM."



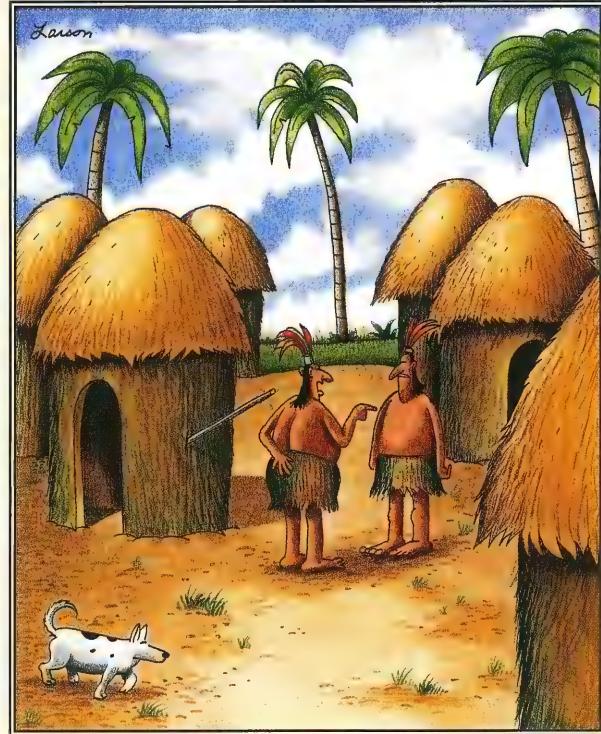
Tapeworms visiting a stomach park

3/22/90



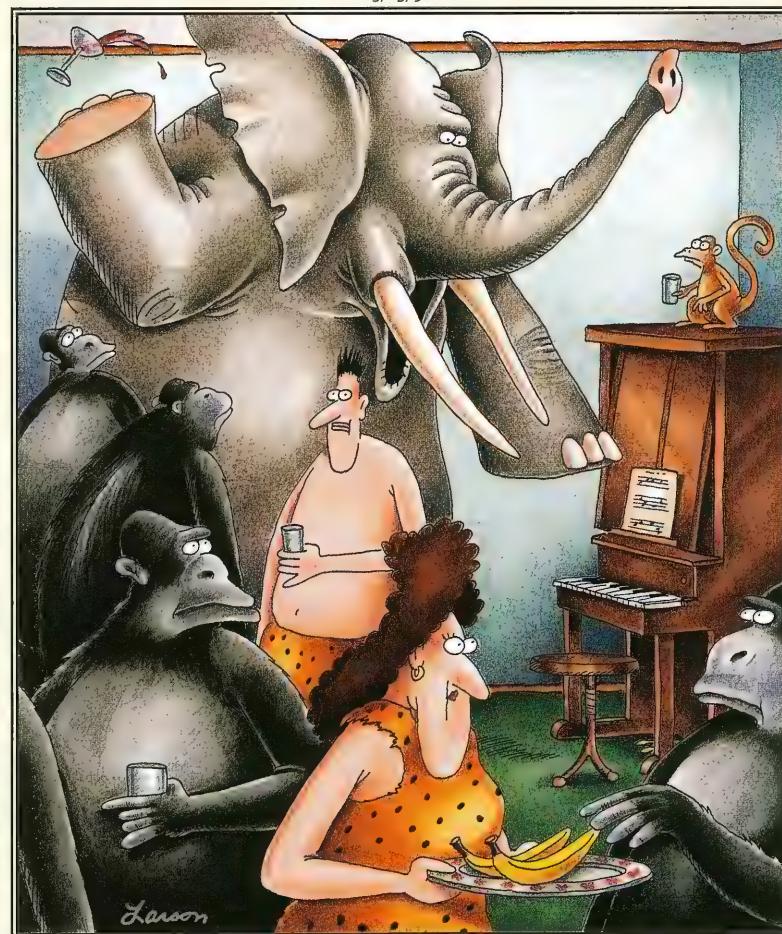
Hours later, when they finally came to, Hal and Ruby groggily returned to their yard work—unknowingly wearing the radio collars and ear tags of alien biologists.

3/30/90



"Okay, Zukutu—that does it! Remember, those who live in grass houses shouldn't throw spears."

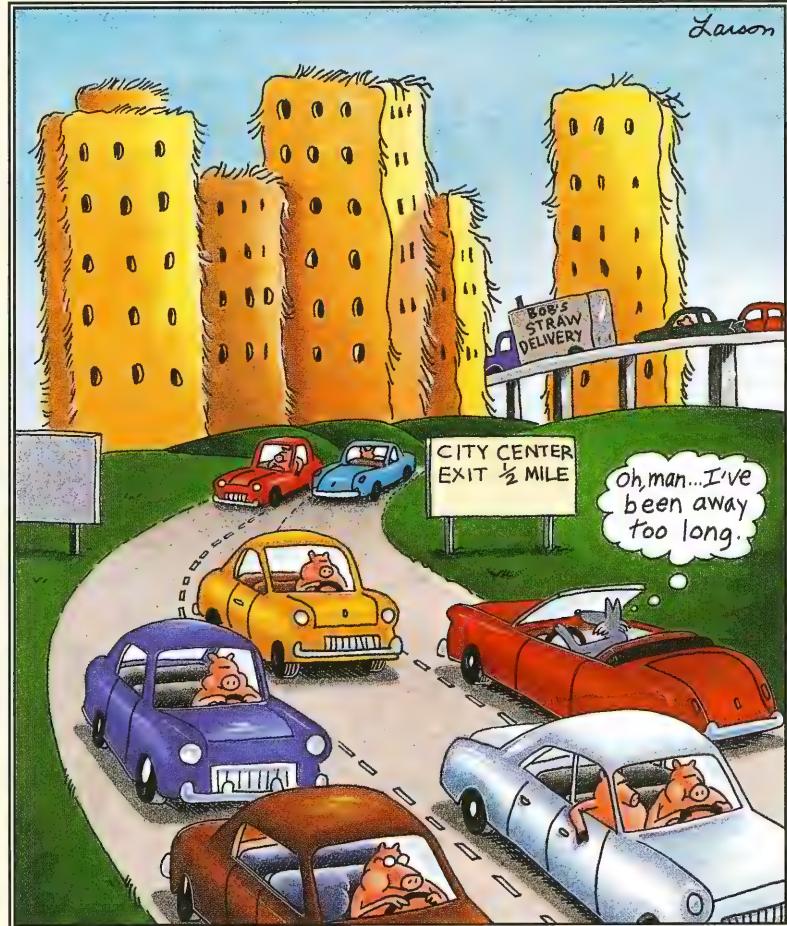
3/23/90



The party had been going splendidly—and then Tantor saw the ivory keyboard.

April 1990

4/4/90

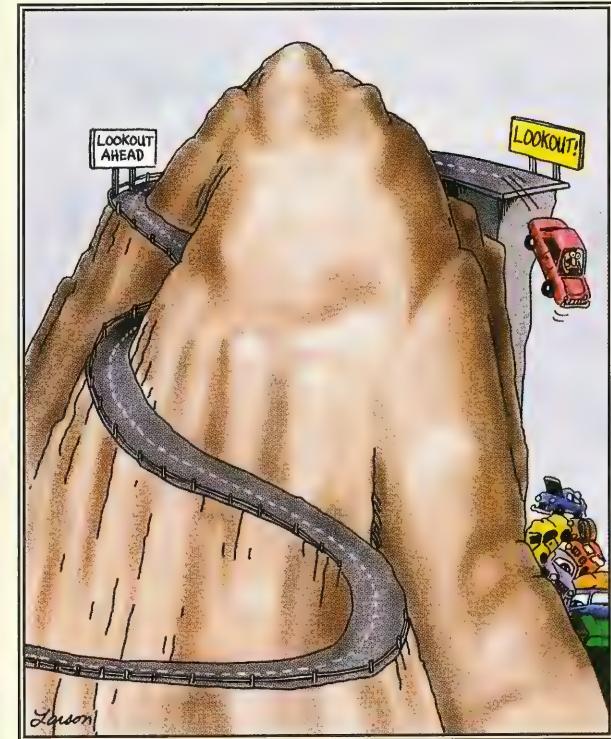


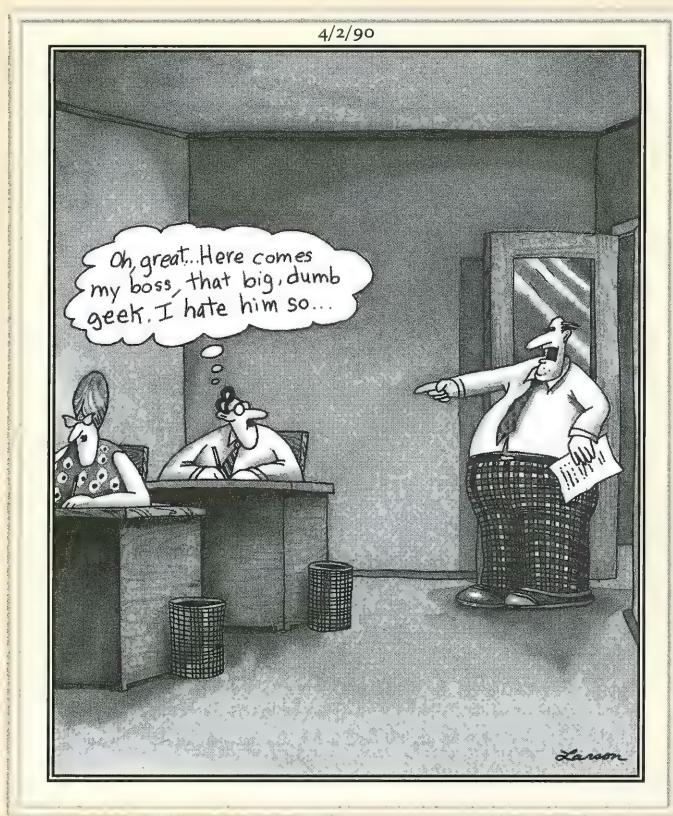
4/5/90



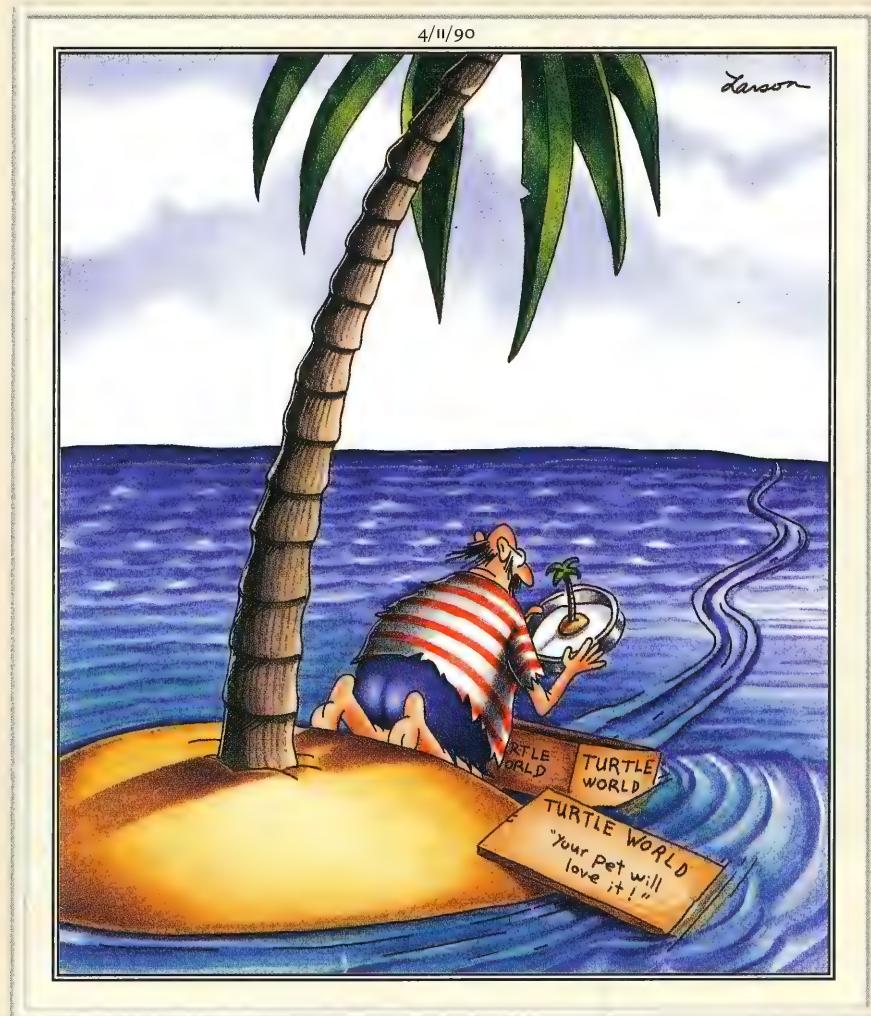
Special Agent Gumby falls into the frustrated hands of the enemy.

4/3/90

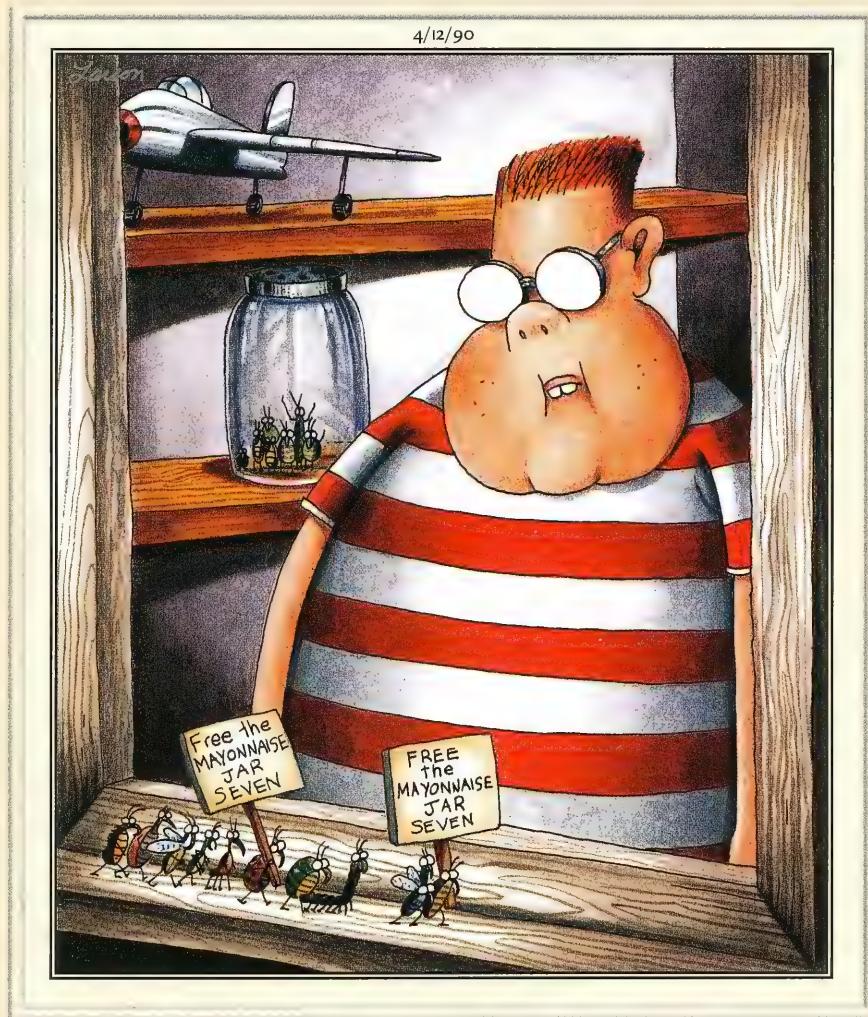




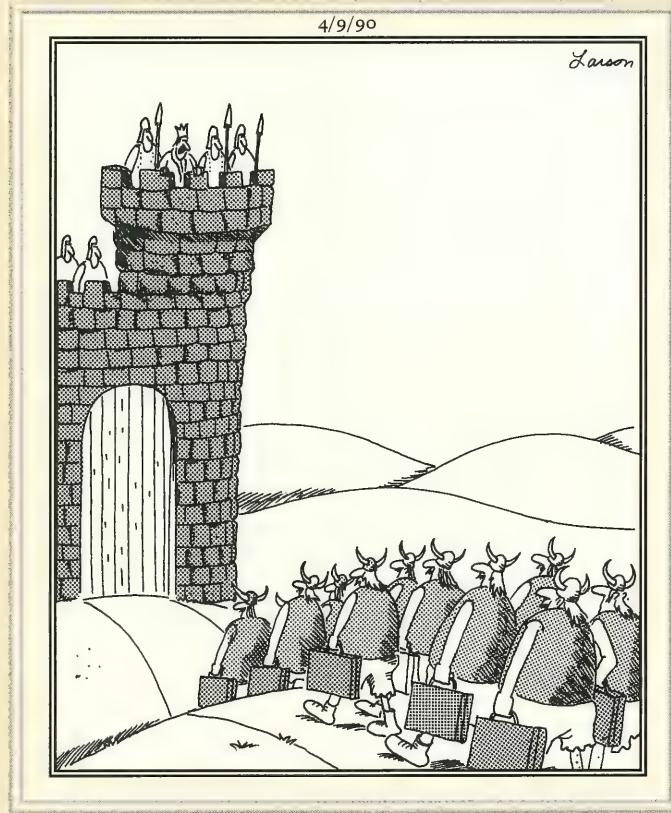
"Oh, yeah? Lewis, you're fired! You apparently forgot this is a cartoon, and I can read every word you think!"



April 1990

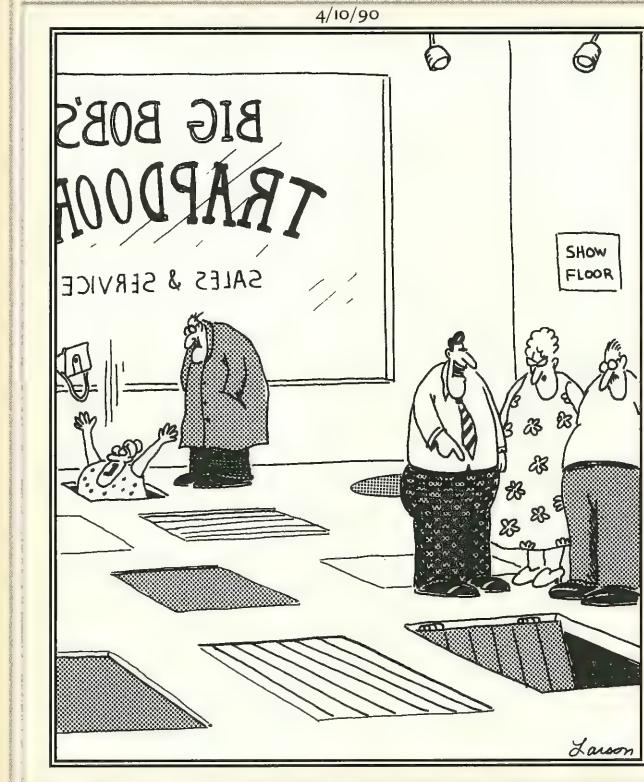


4/9/90

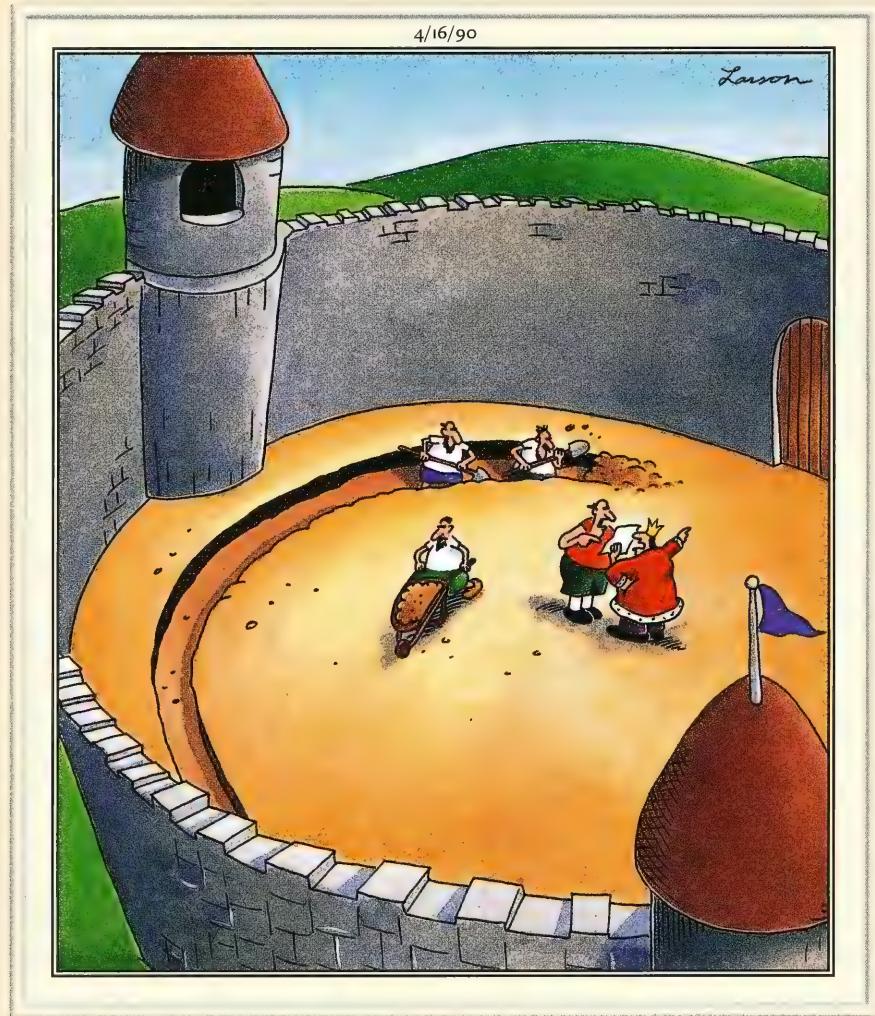


"My God! Vikings! And they mean business!"

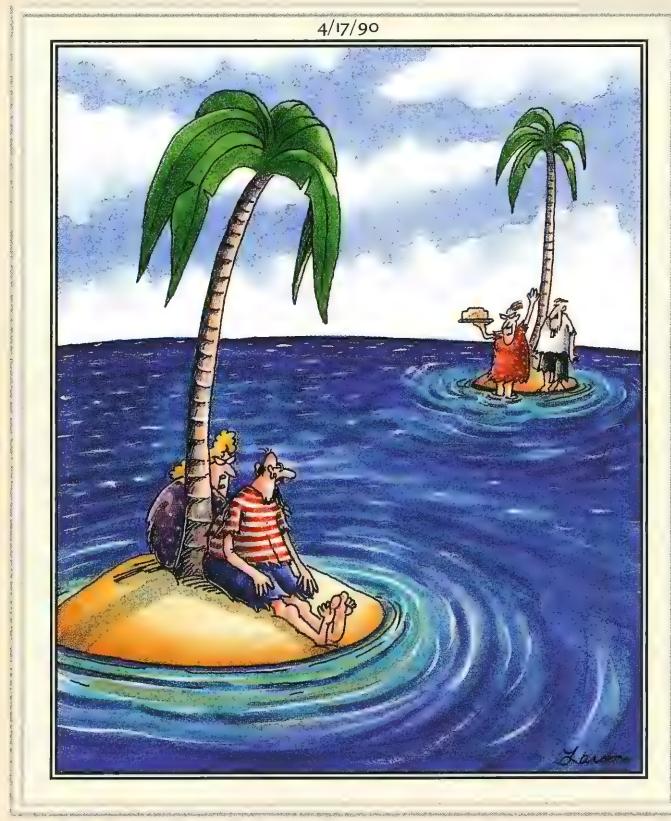
4/10/90



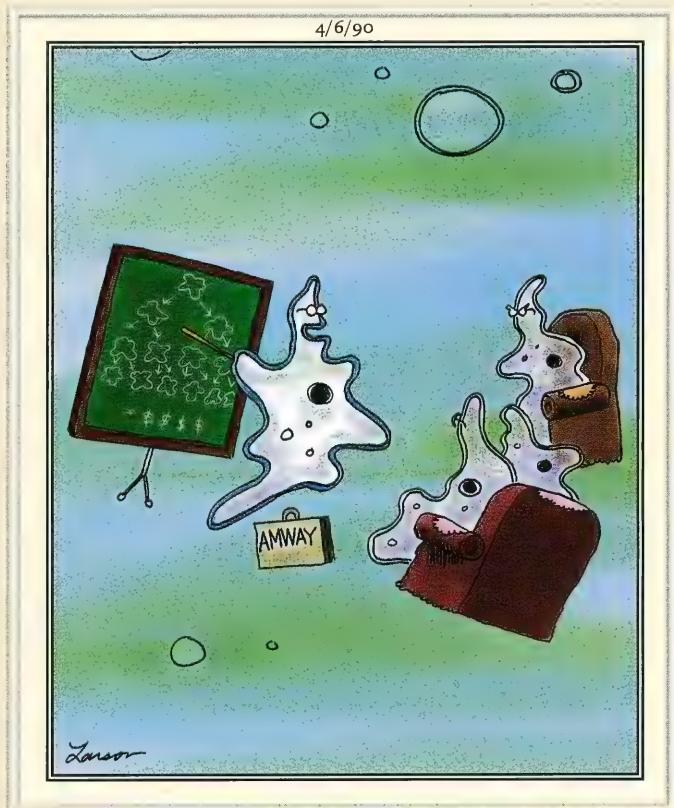
"Don't worry ... your little boy's somewhere in our service department—but let's move on and check out the TD500."



Suddenly, a heated exchange took place between the king and the moat contractor.

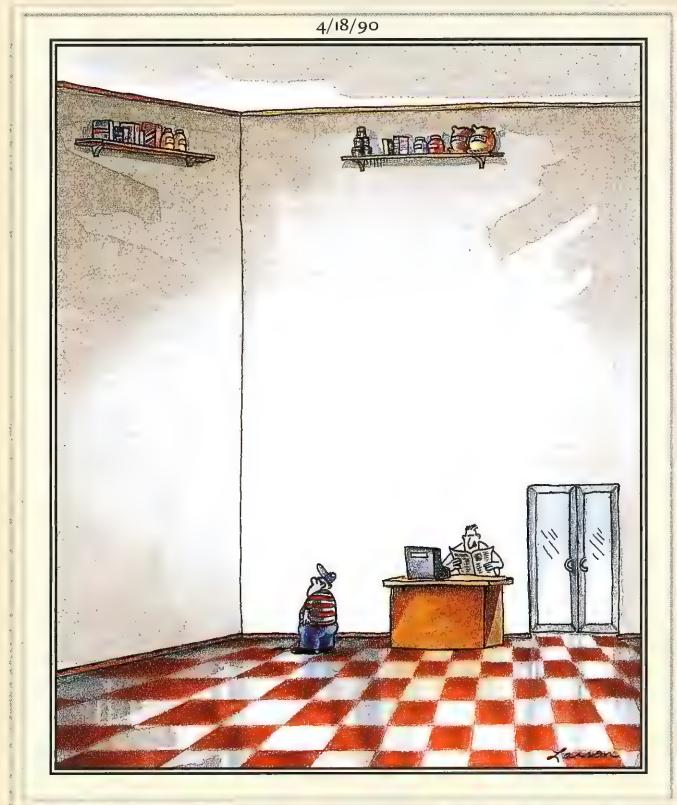


"Uh-oh. Carol's inviting us over for cake, and I'm sure it's just loaded with palm oil."

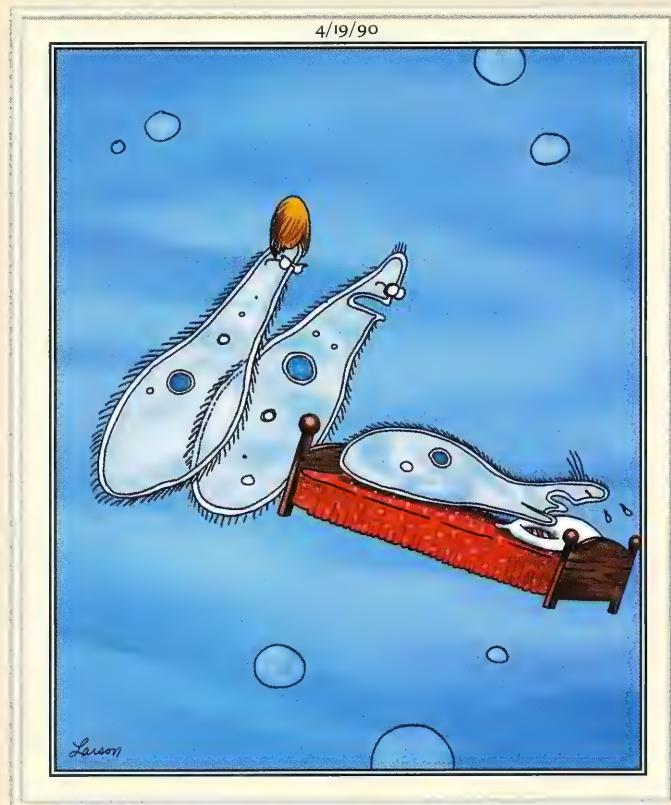


"And as amoebas, you'll have no problems recruiting other sales reps ... just keep dividing and selling, dividing and selling."

April 1990



Inconvenience stores



"Now Betty Sue, we know you're upset ...
breaking up with a boyfriend is always hard.
But, as they say, there are more protozoa
in the lower intestine."



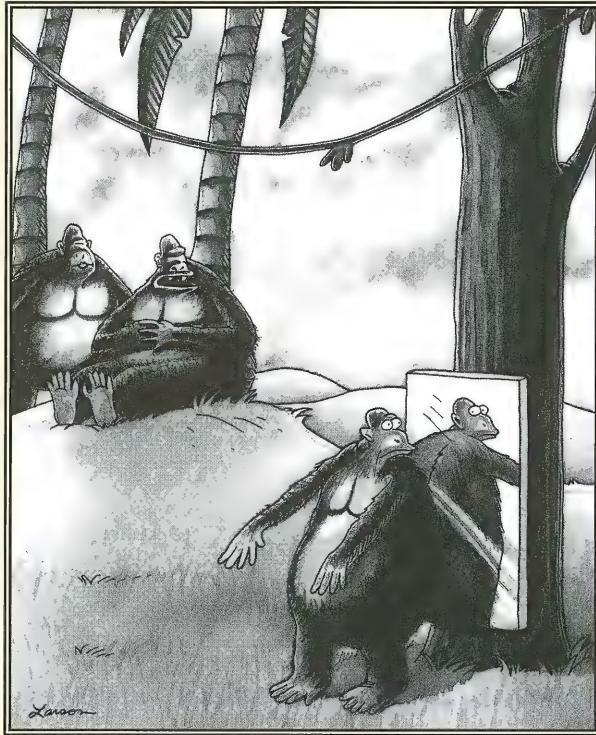
"Throw him in the swamp? You idiot!
That's the *first* place they'll look."

4/22/90



Editor's note: This is a special cartoon Gary drew for Earth Day 1990, as part of a project in which many cartoonists participated to bring more awareness to the state of the environment.

4/24/90

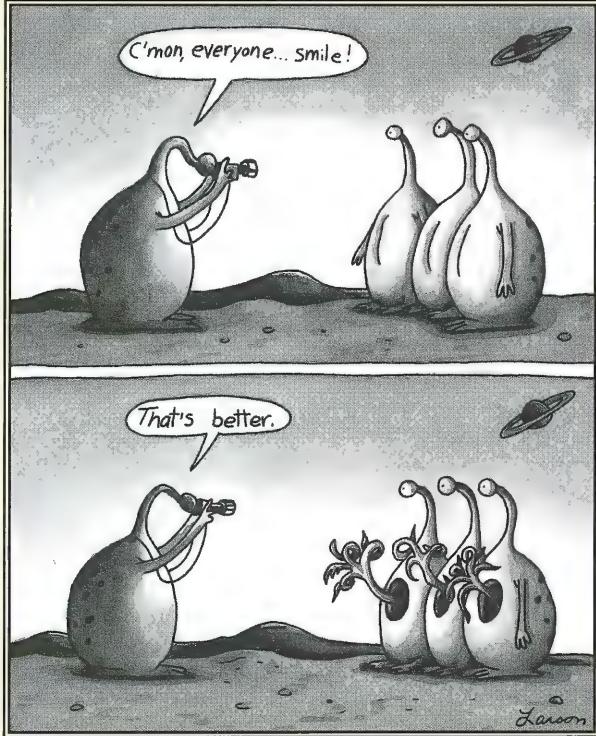


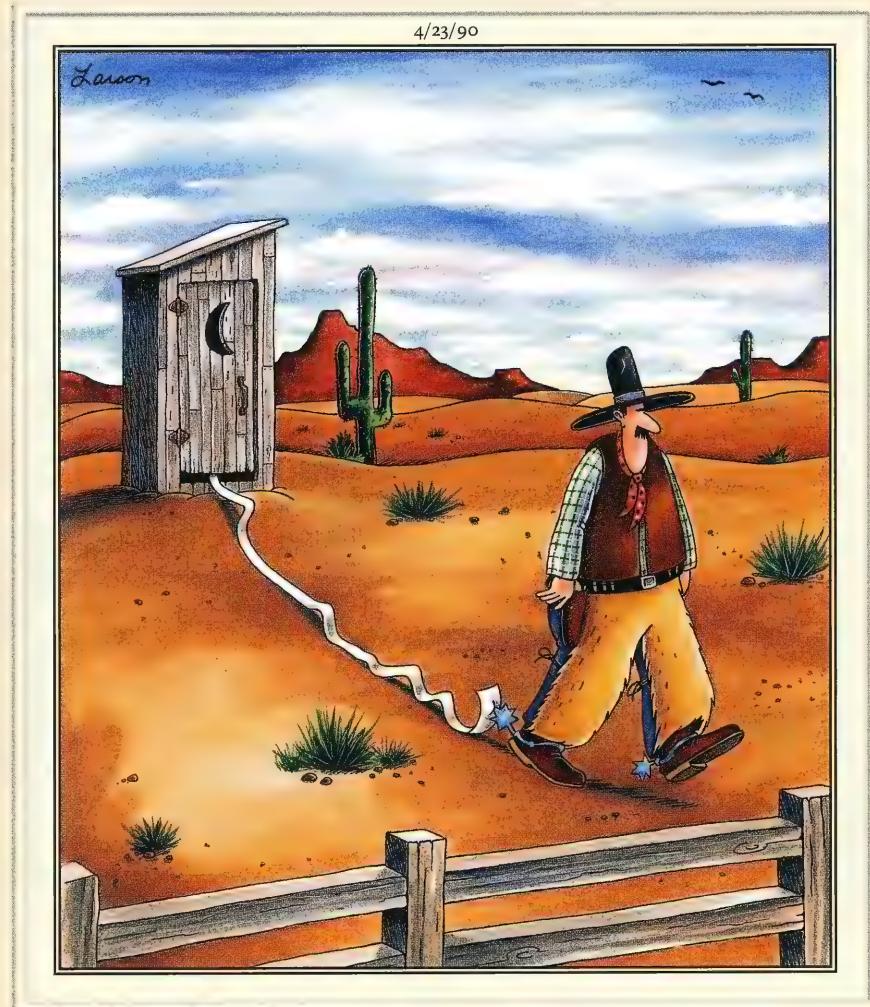
"Well, there he goes again ... 'Course, I guess I did the same thing at his age—checking every day to see if I was becoming a silverback."

4/25/90

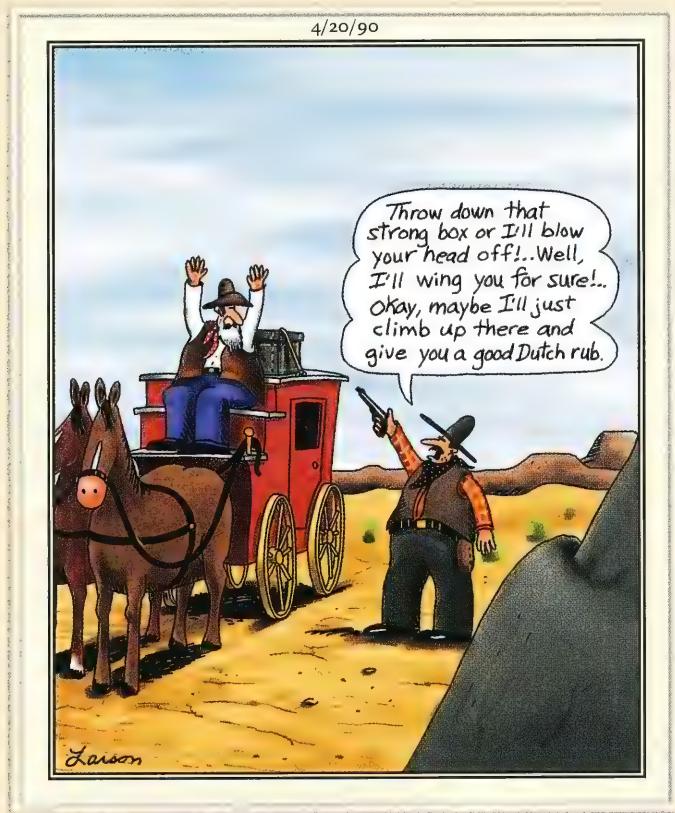


4/30/90





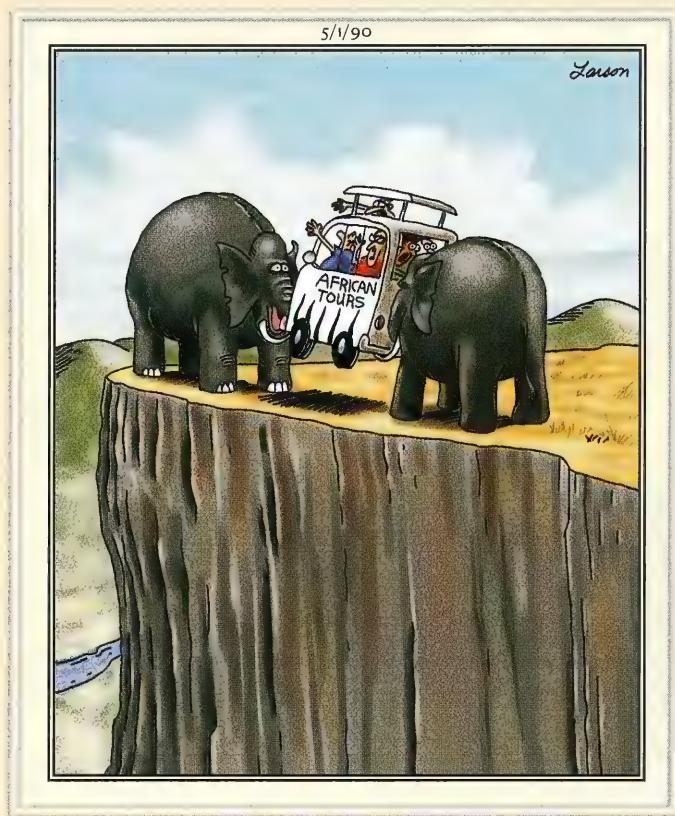
Nerds of the Old West



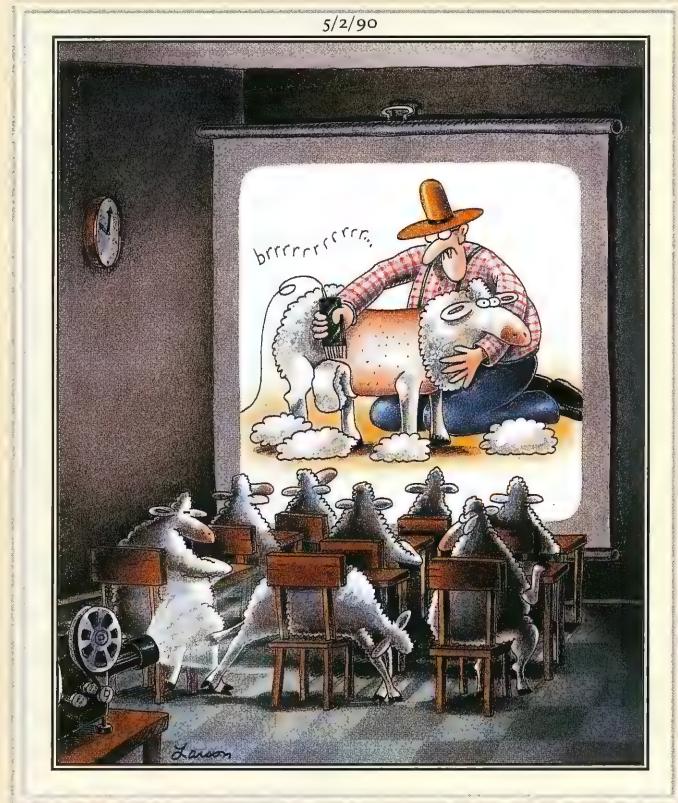
Semi-desperadoes



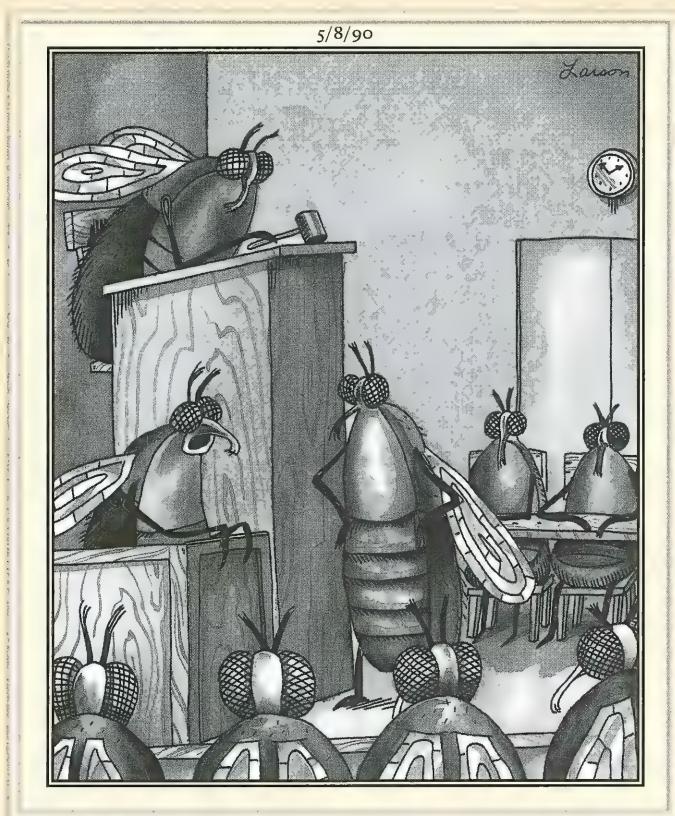
Bowler's hell



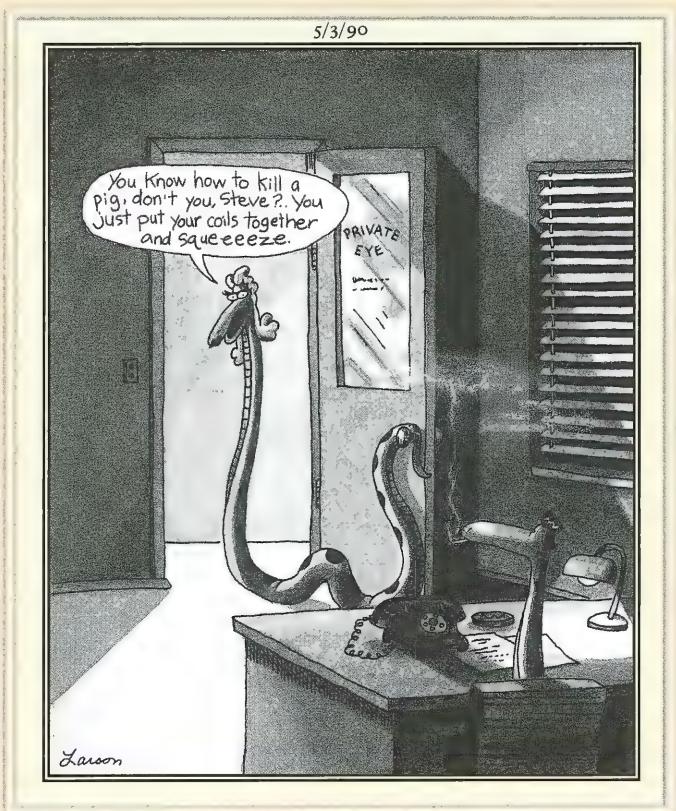
"On three, Vince. Ready?"



Sheep health classes



"So once they started talking, I just remained motionless, taking in every word. ... Of course, it was pure luck I just happened to be a fly on the wall."



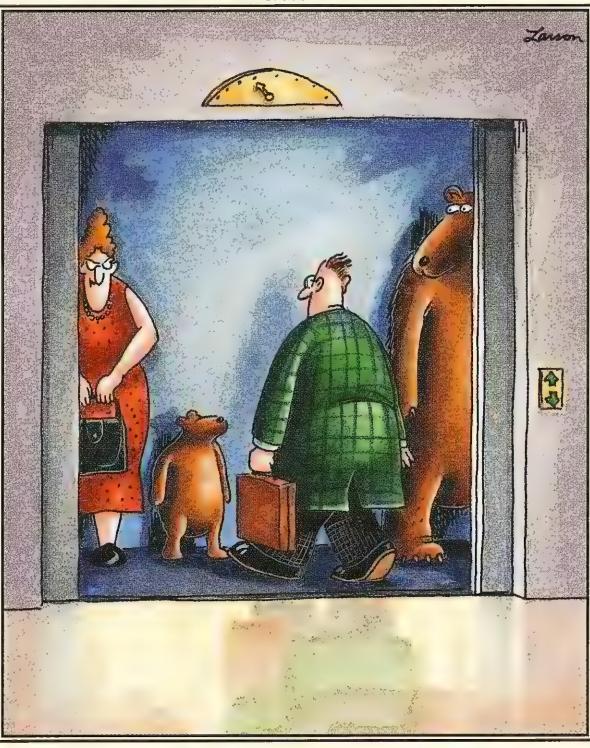
Scenes from classic nature films

5/4/90



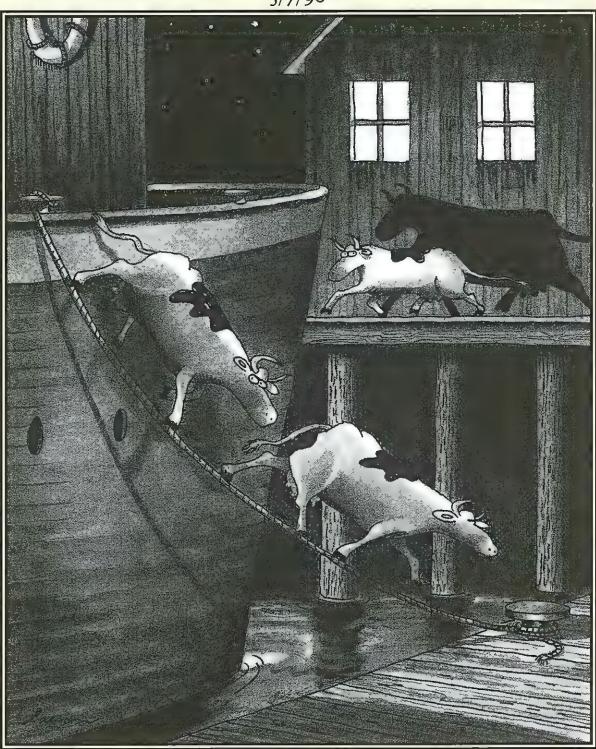
"Well, here's your problem, Marge—if you and Bob really want kids, next time try sittin' on these little guys."

5/9/90



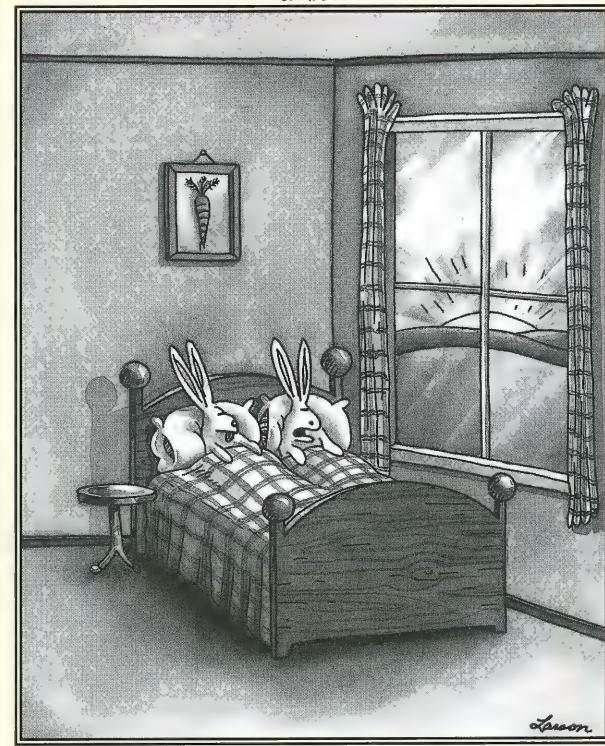
Tragedy struck when Conroy, his mind preoccupied with work, stepped into the elevator—directly between a female grizzly and her cub.

5/7/90

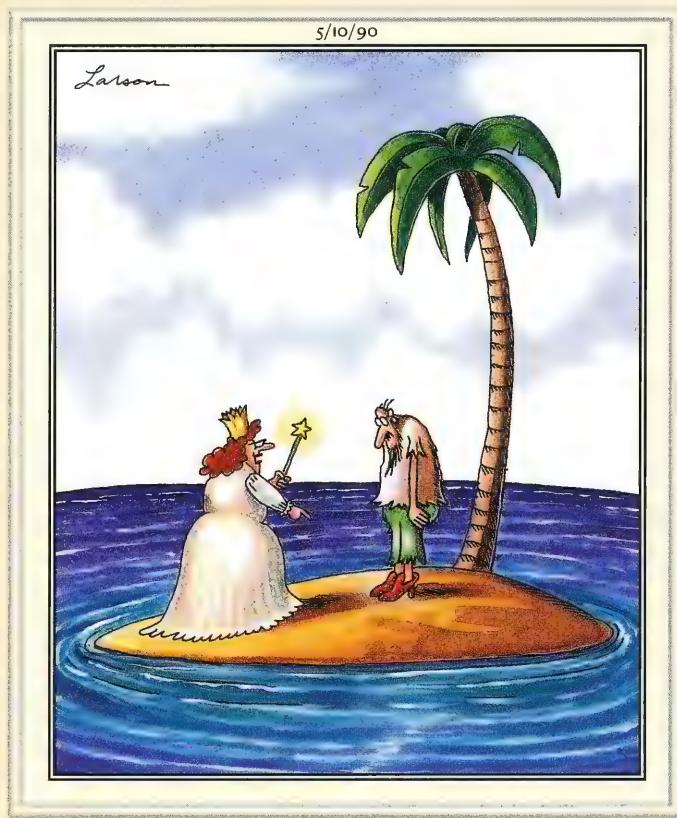


Wharf cows

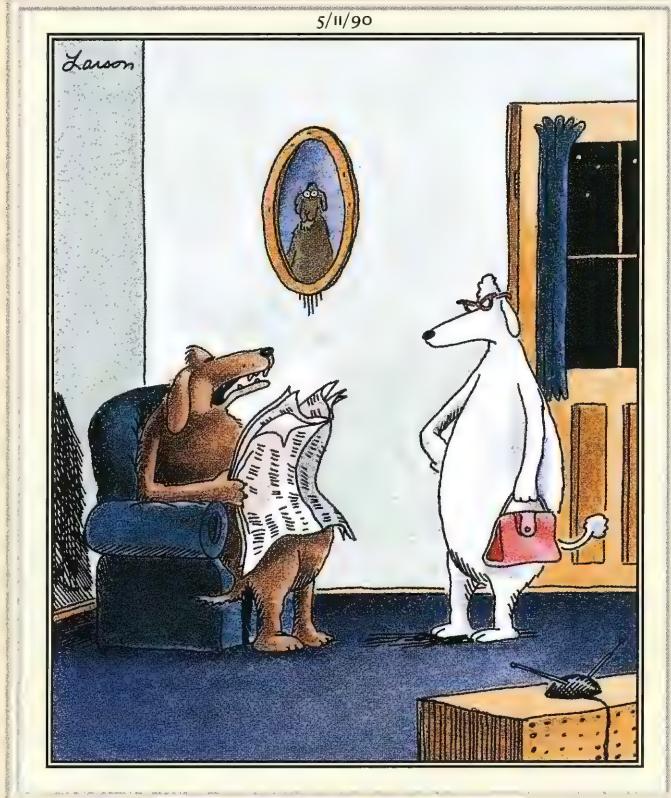
5/14/90



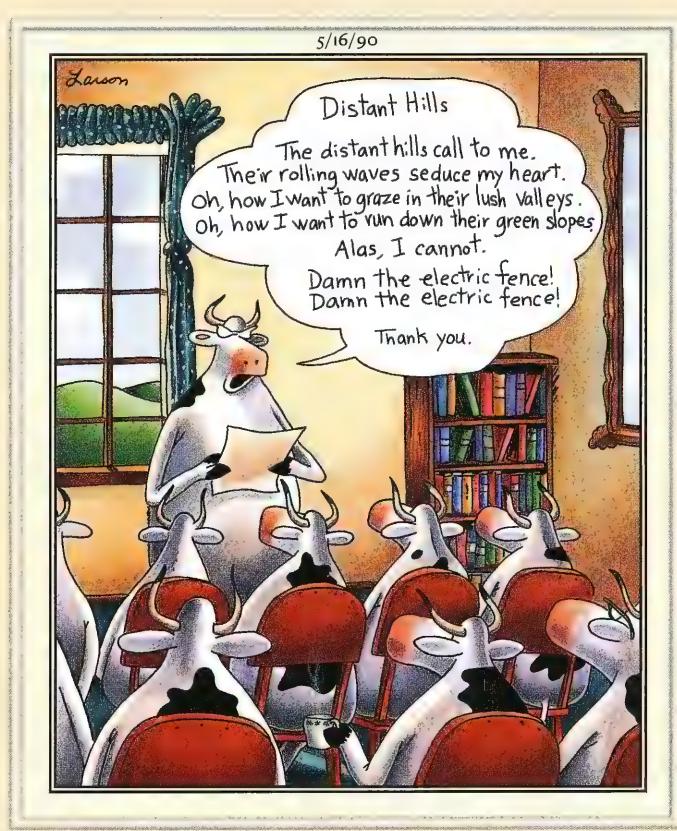
"Sometimes, just sometimes, I wish I didn't have to hop out of bed first thing every morning. ... 'Course, that's the only way I know how."



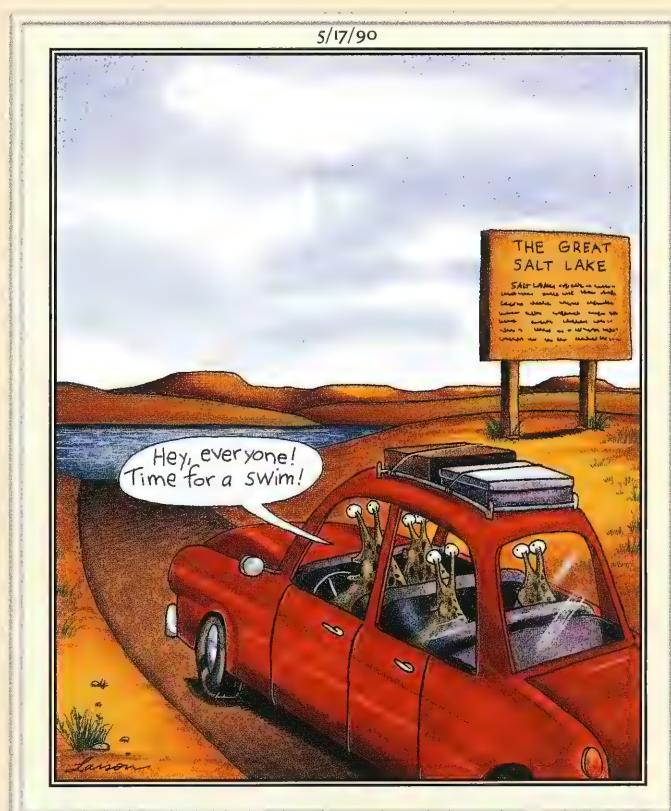
"All this time you've been able to go home whenever you desired—just click your heels together and repeat after me ..."



"No way am I going to that party tonight! I won't know anyone there, which means I'll be constantly introduced—and you know I never learned how to shake!"

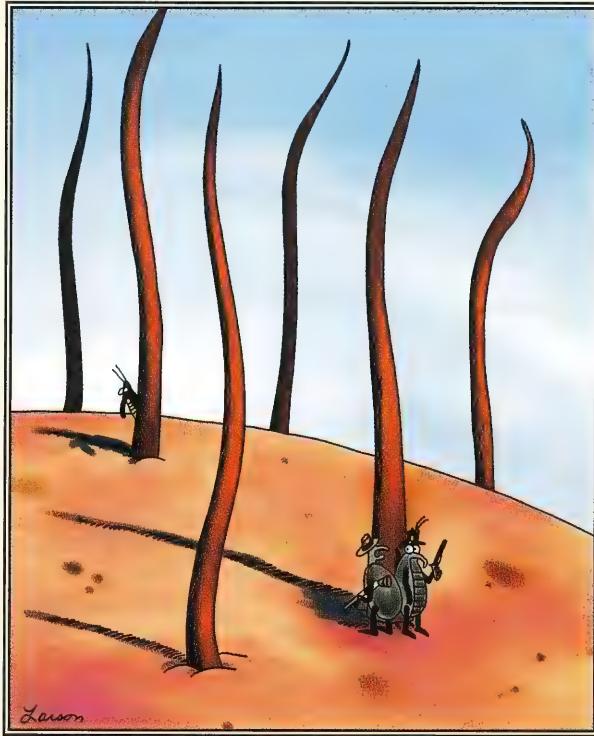


Cow poetry



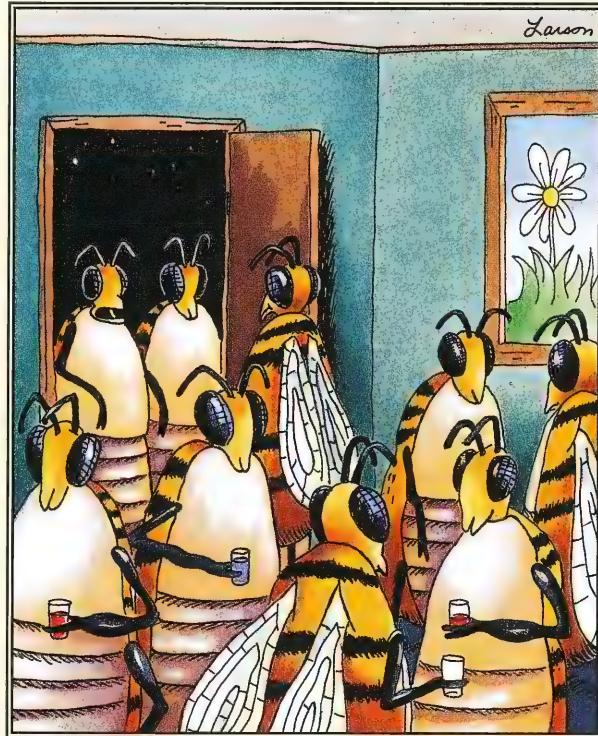
Slug vacation disasters

5/18/90



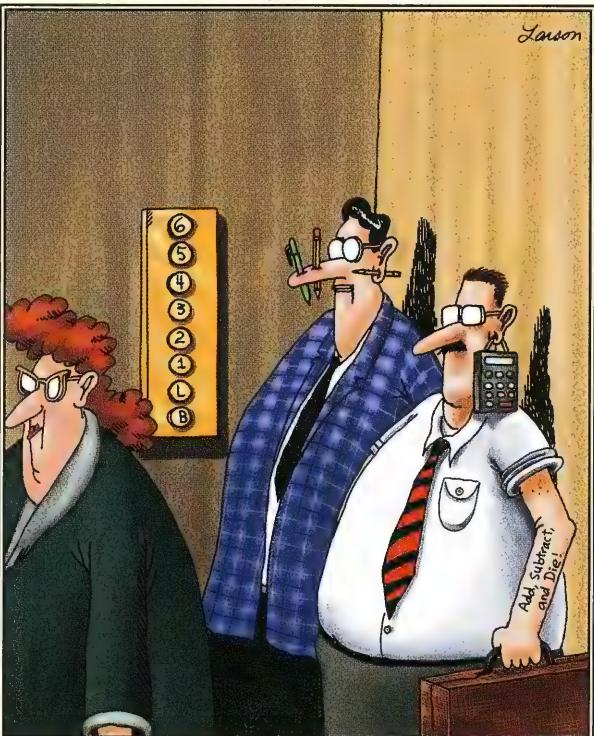
"Listen, before we try and take this guy, let me ask you this: You ever kill a flea before, Dawkins? ... It ain't easy."

5/23/90



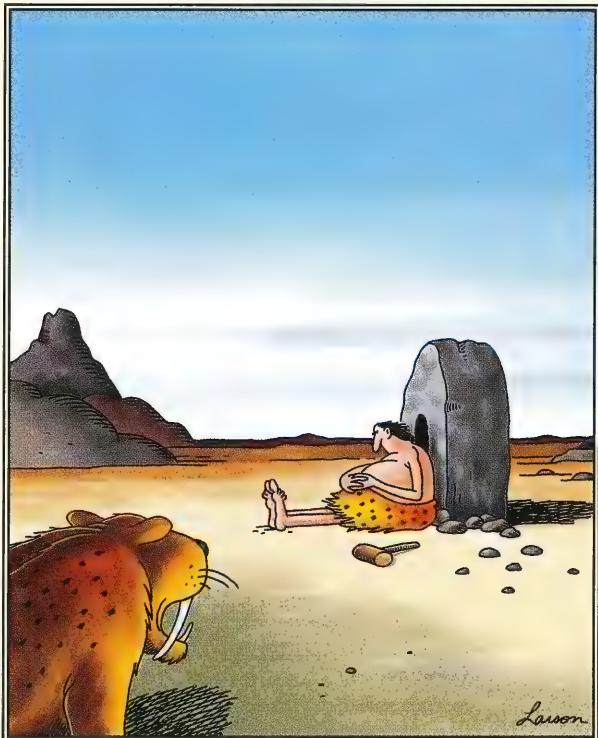
"Wow, this place is really packed—or maybe it's just my compound eyes."

5/21/90



Punk accountants

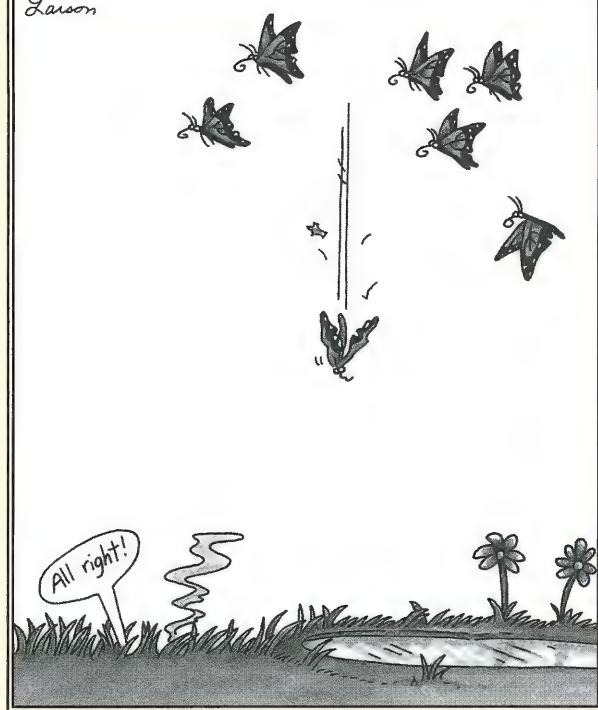
5/22/90



Thag Anderson becomes the first fatality as a result of falling asleep at the wheel.

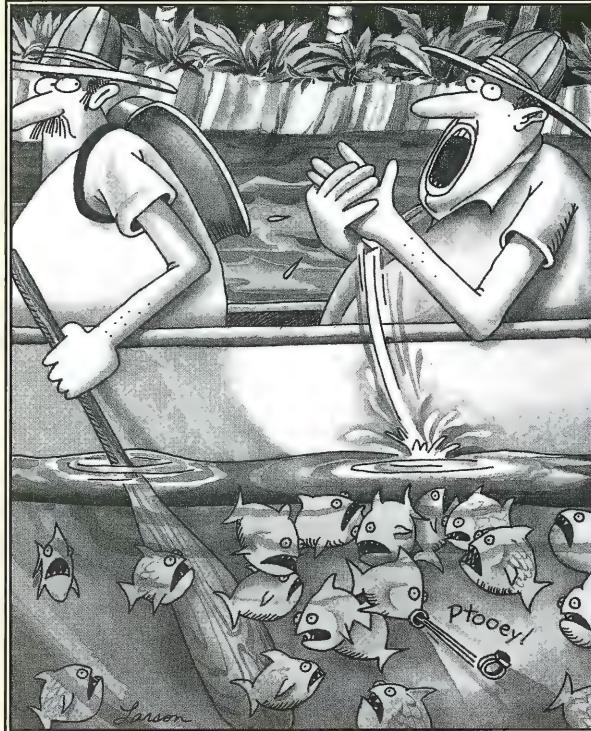
5/15/90

Larson



As the flock of monarchs, in a silent burst of black and gold, rose from the puddle's edge, a sudden "crack" knifed through the still morning air. A spider's shotgun had found its mark.

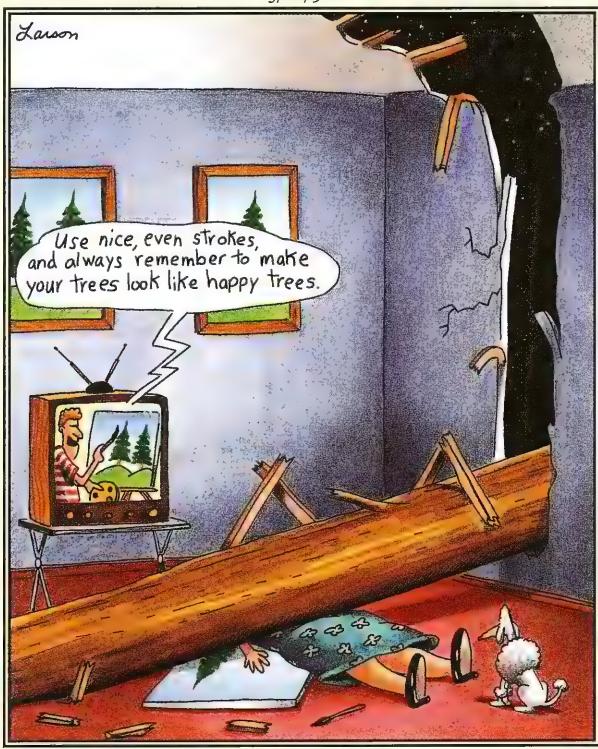
5/24/90



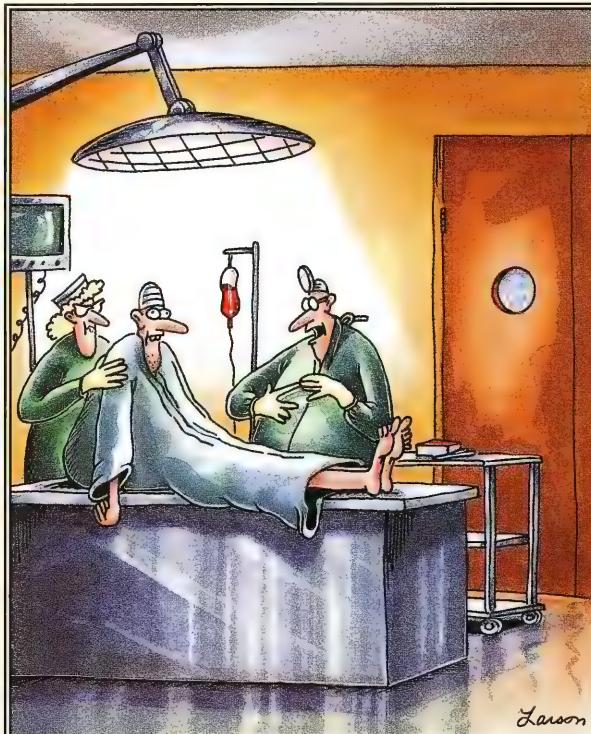
Helpful hints for the jungle traveler: Never drag your hand in piranha-infested waters.

5/28/90

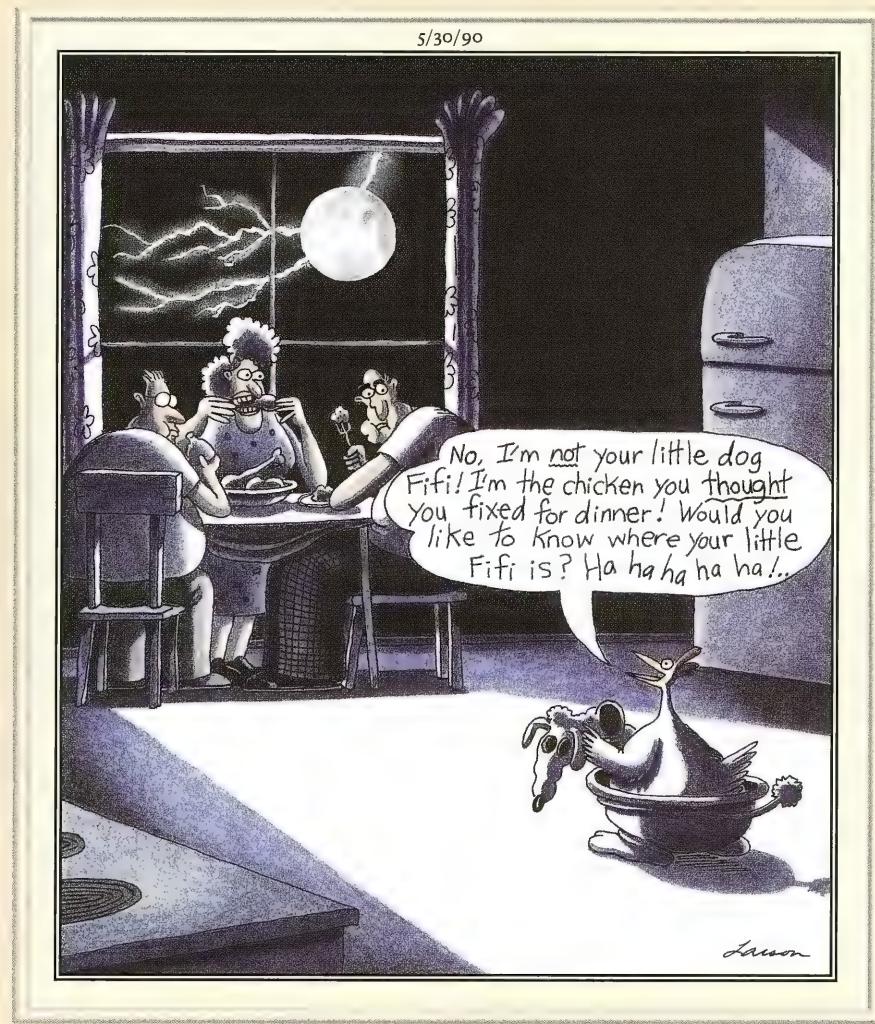
Larson



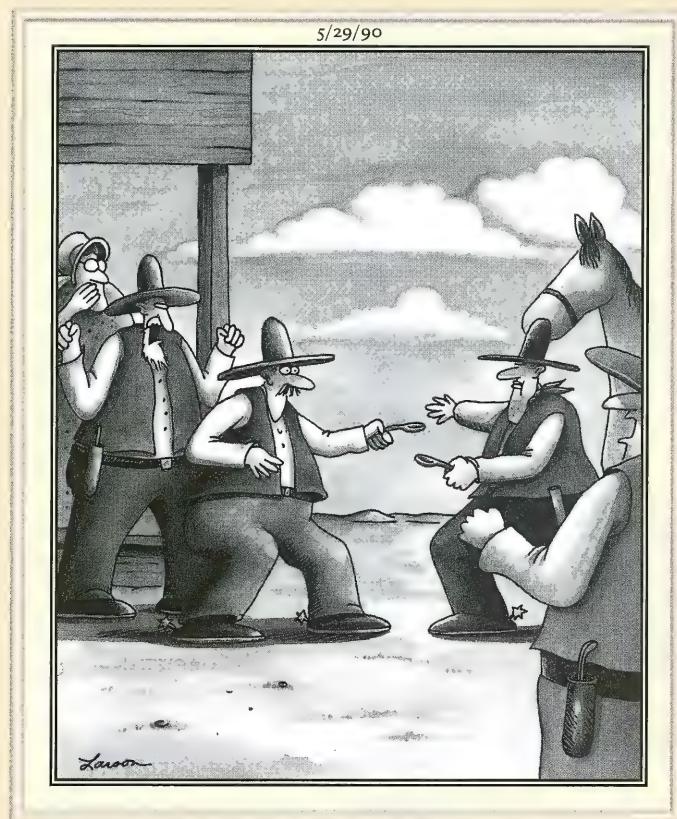
5/25/90



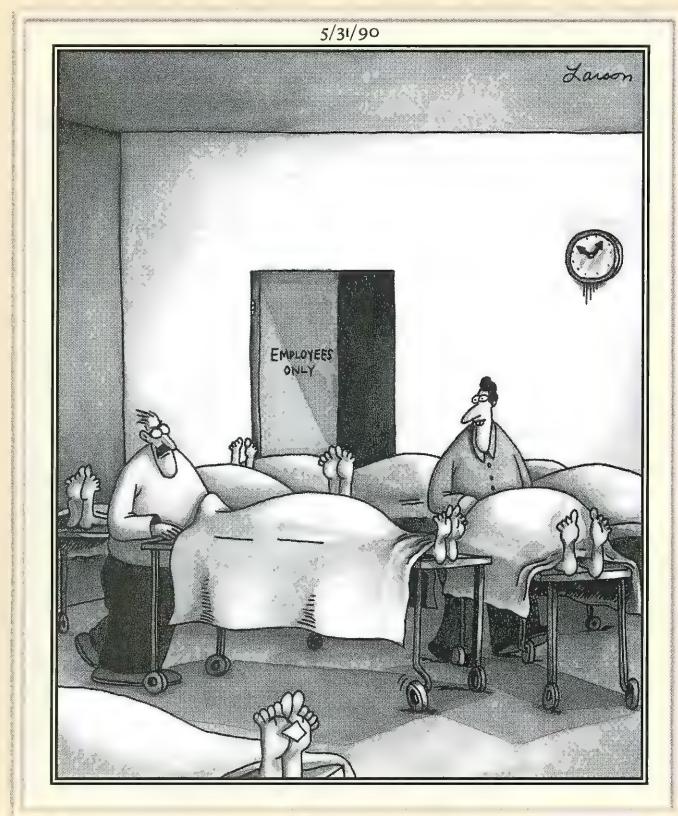
"Okay, Mr. Dittman, remember: That brain is only a temporary, so don't think too hard with it."



Scene from *Dinner on Elm Street*

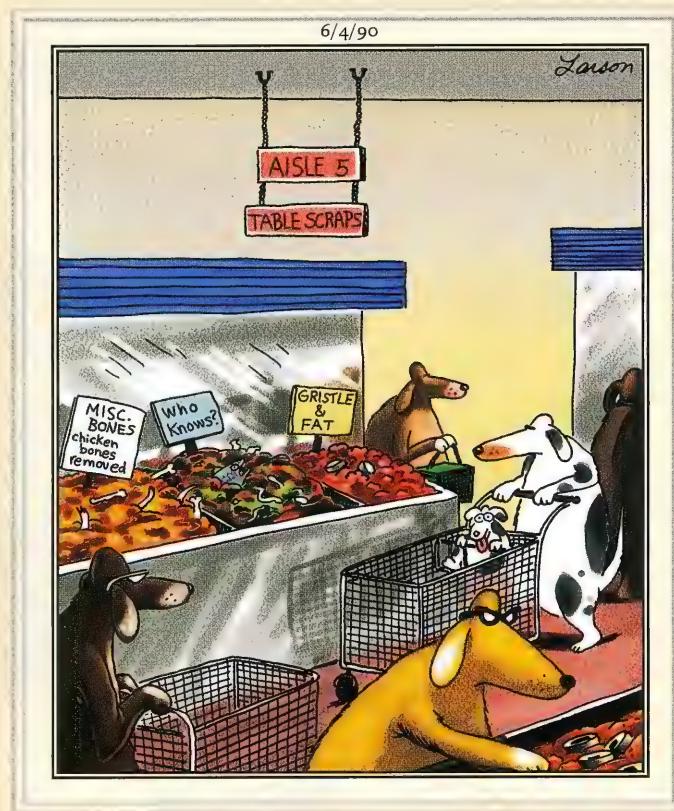
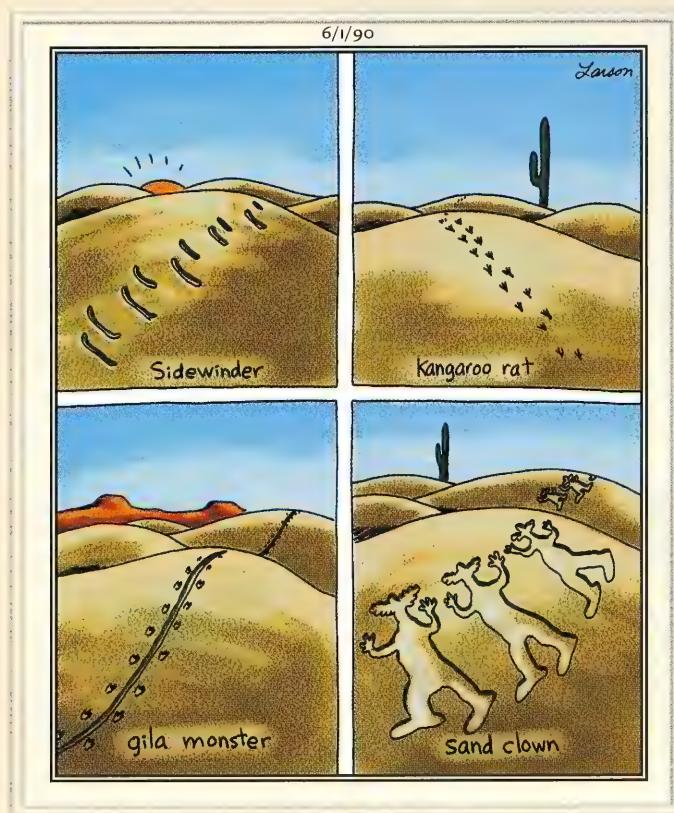


Until finally being replaced by its more popular and deadly cousin, the Bowie spoon was often used to settle disputes in the Old West.

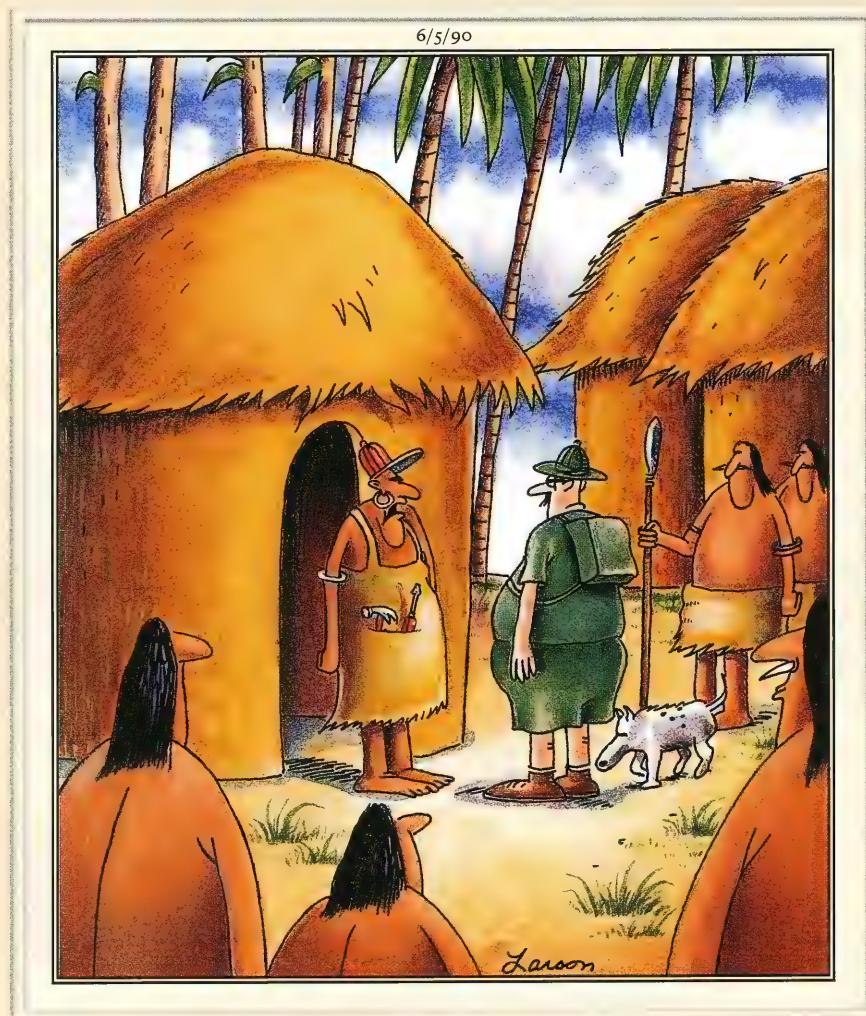


"Well, here we go again! I always get the gurney with one bad wheel!"

June 1990

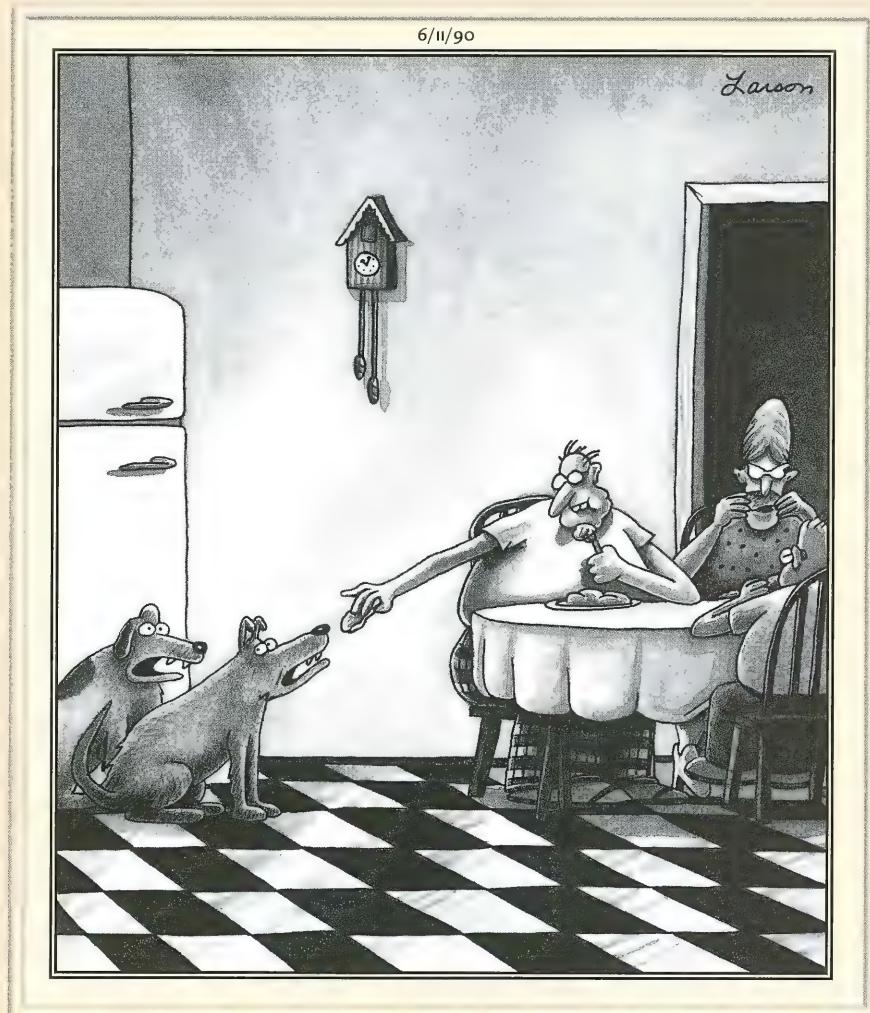


Common desert animal tracks

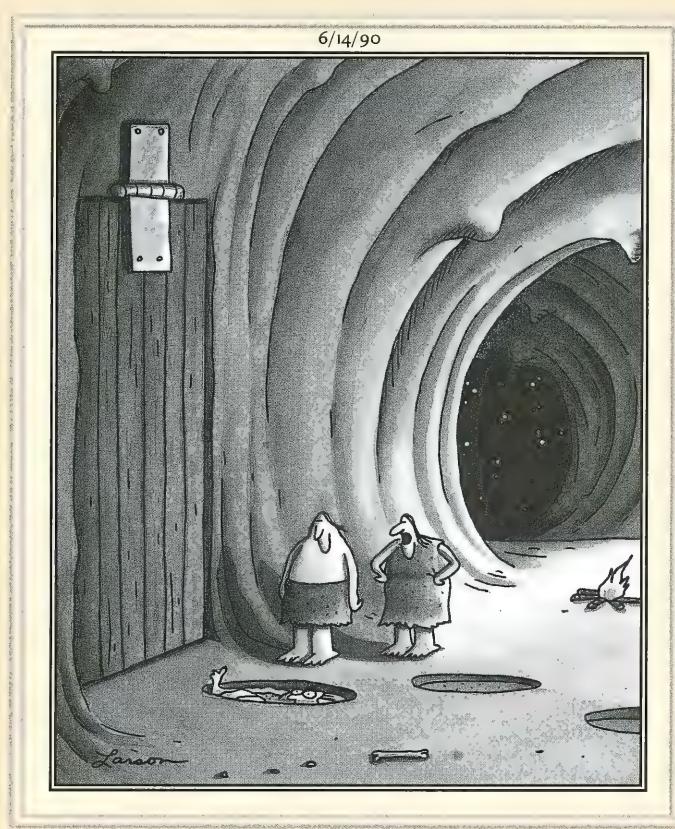


"You need to see medicine man—me just handyman."

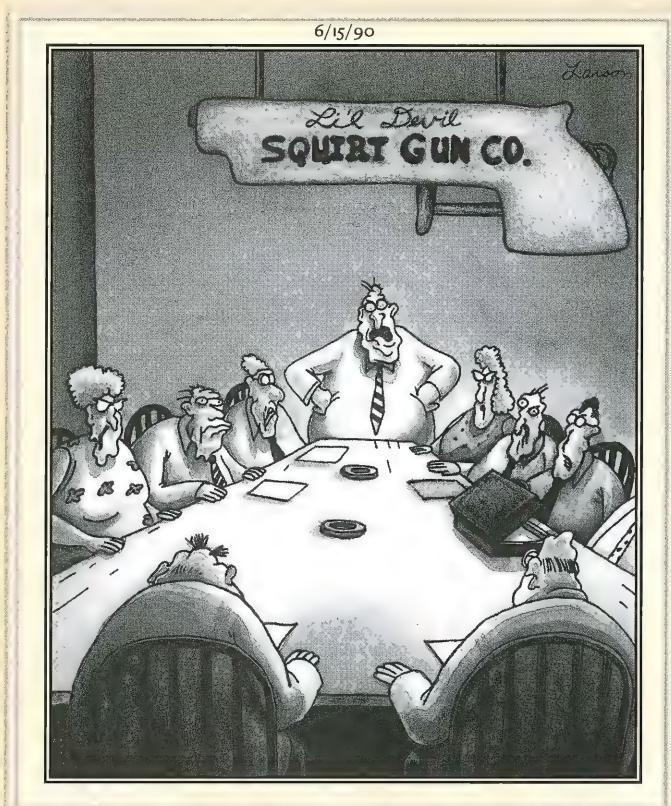
June 1990



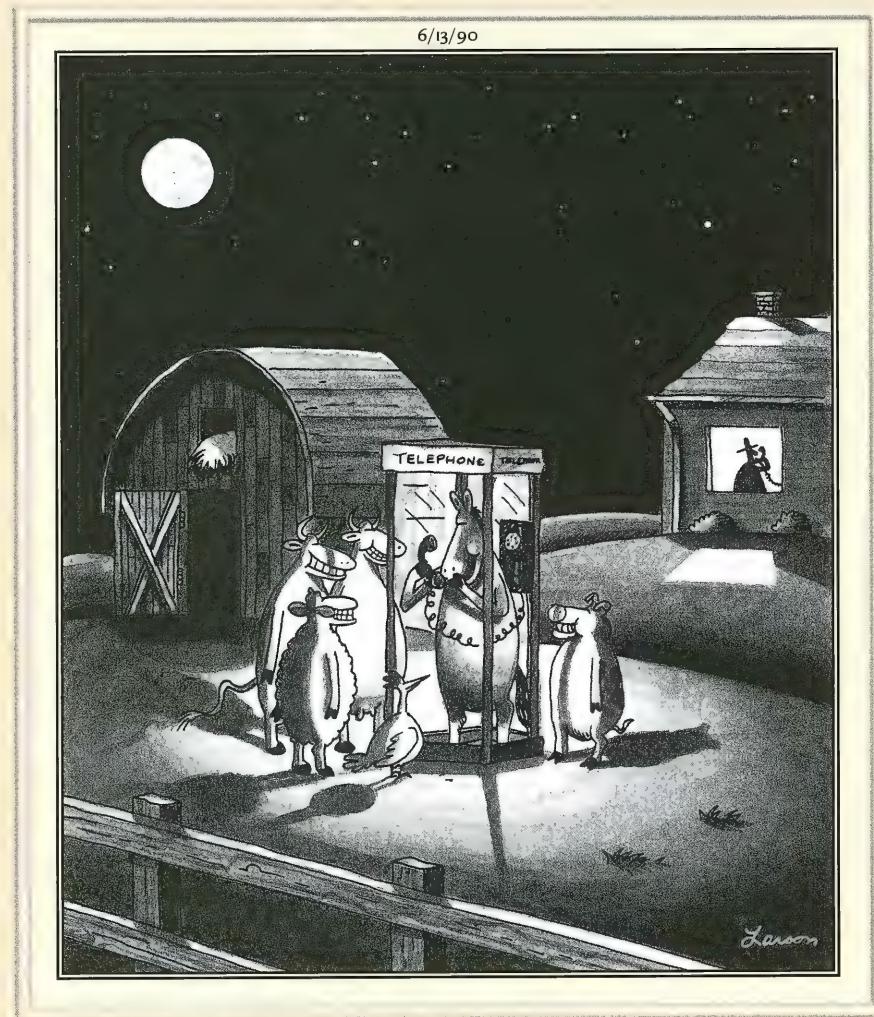
"Rex! Don't take it! Everyone knows their mouths are dirtier than our own!"



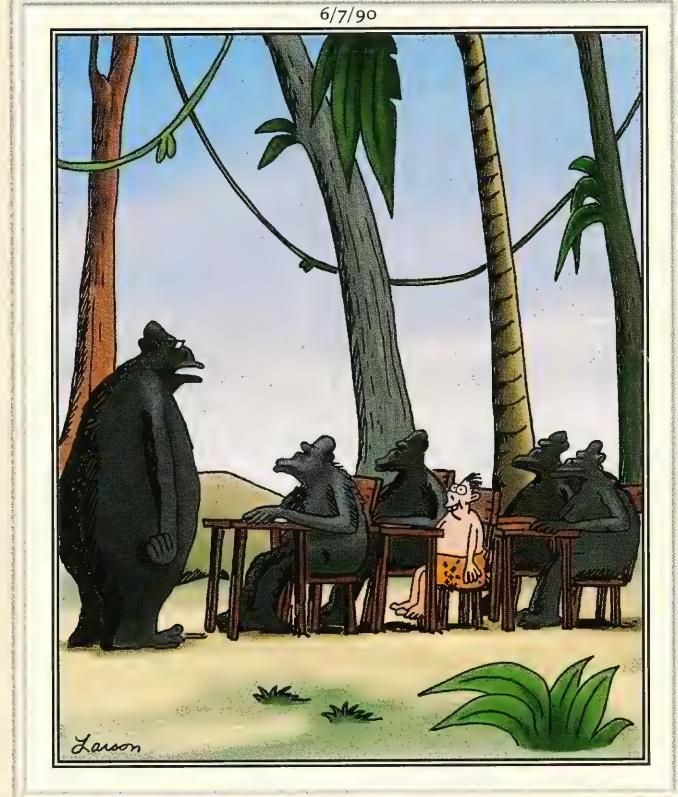
"Well, like I said, a mammoth shouldn't be allowed in the cave to begin with—but installing a swinging door was just plain crazy!"



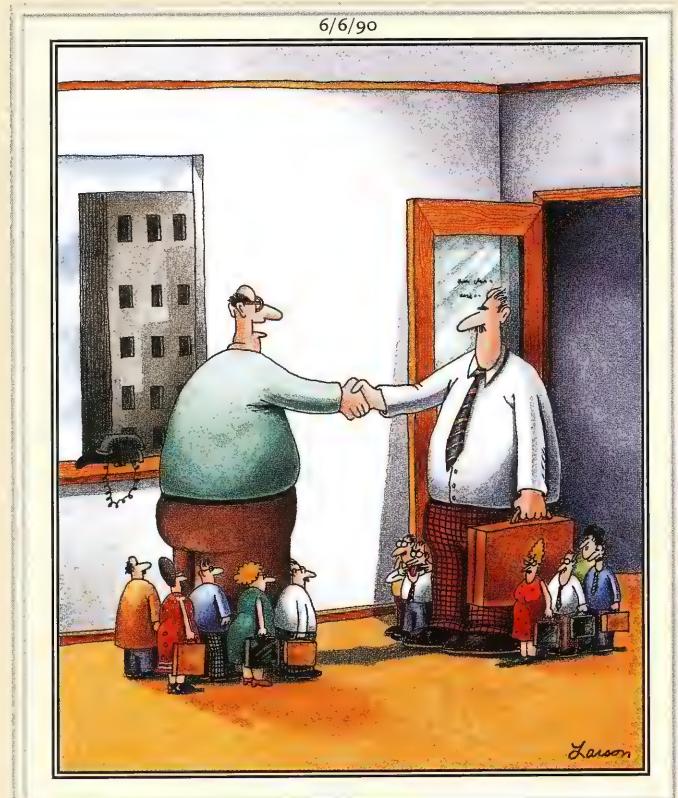
"And one more thing about tomorrow's company picnic: Do I have to mention what happened last year when some moron sabotaged the games with a case of acid-filled LD-50s?"



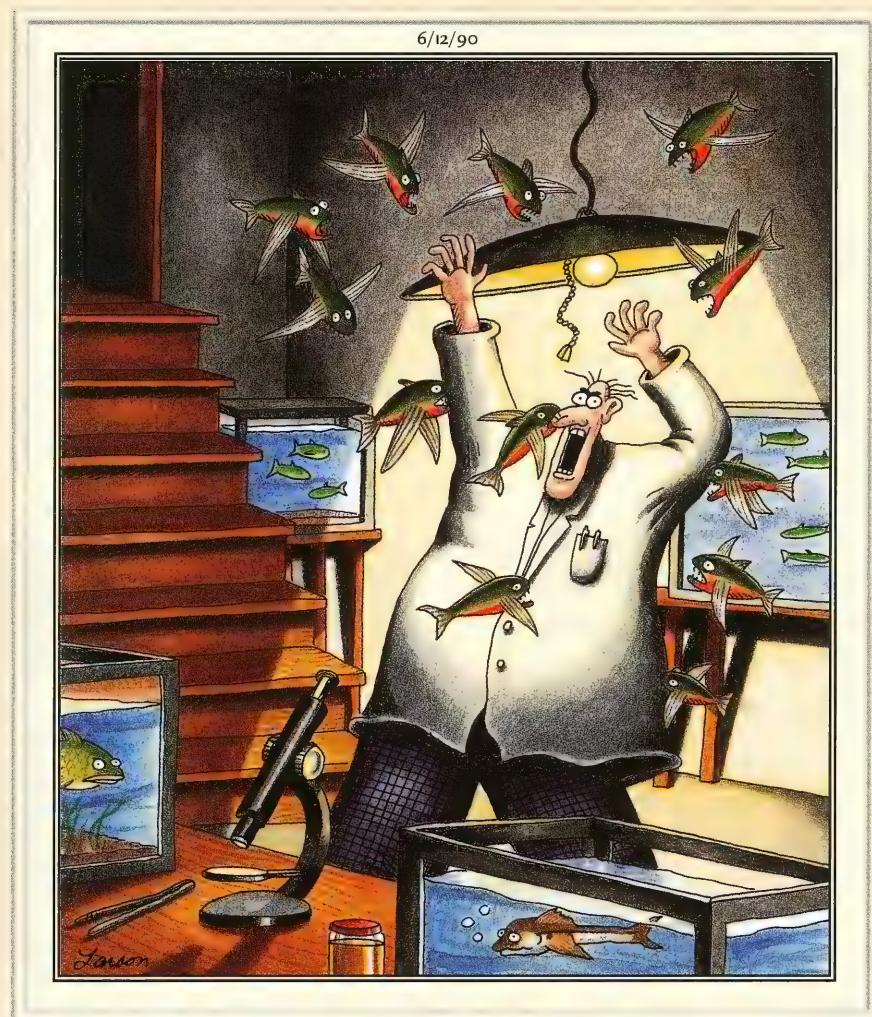
"Farmer Bob ... your barn door's open."



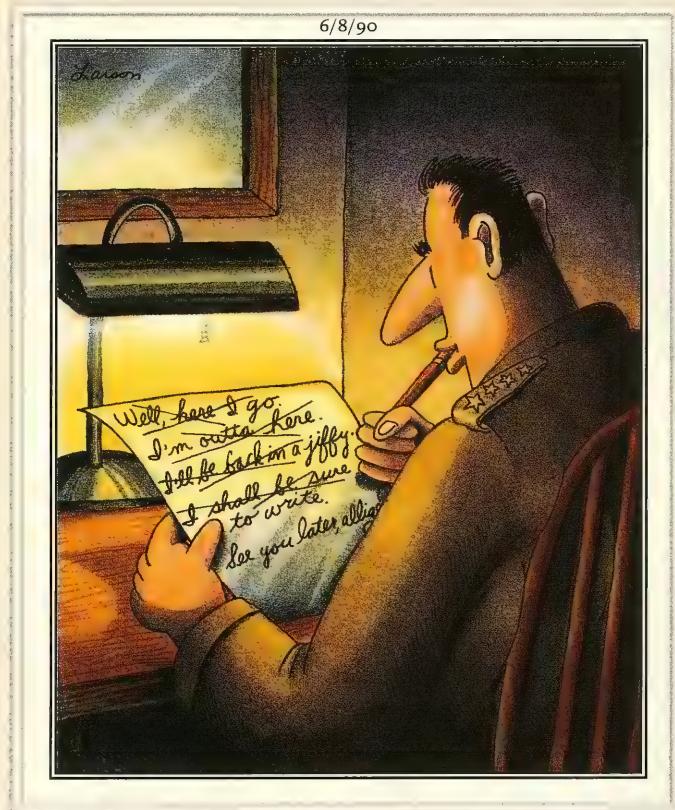
"And the really great thing about this jungle of ours is that any one of you could grow up to be King of the Apes."



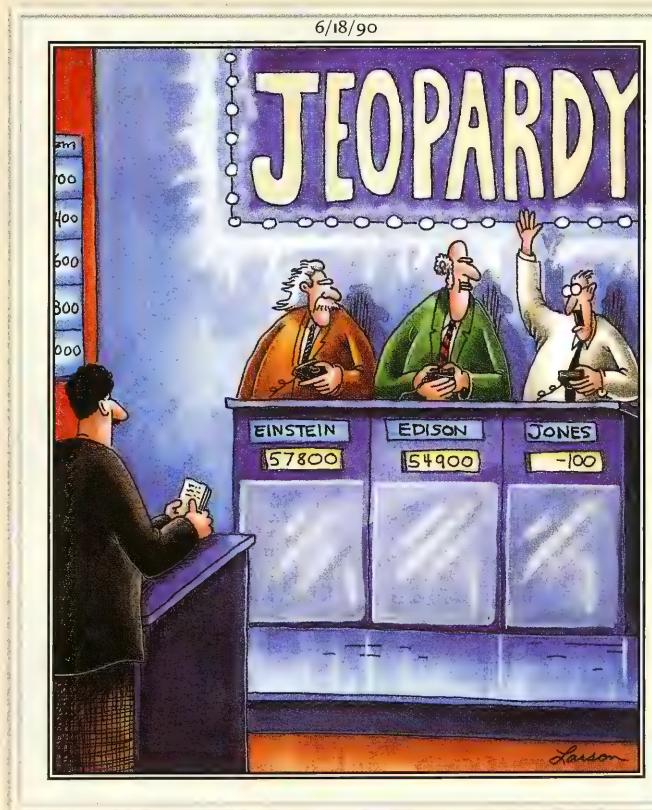
"Okay, Johnson—we've got a deal. We'll let your people and my people work out the details."



After flicking on the light, Professor Zerkowitz is caught off guard by the overnight success of his efforts to crossbreed flying fish and piranhas.



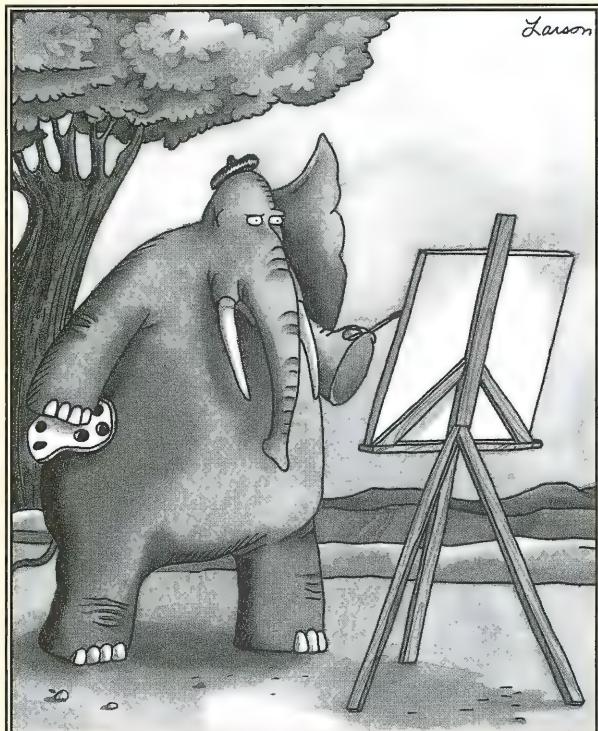
March 16, 1942: The night before he leaves the Philippines, General MacArthur works on his farewell address.



"Excuse me ... I know the game's almost over, but just for the record, I don't think my buzzer was working properly."

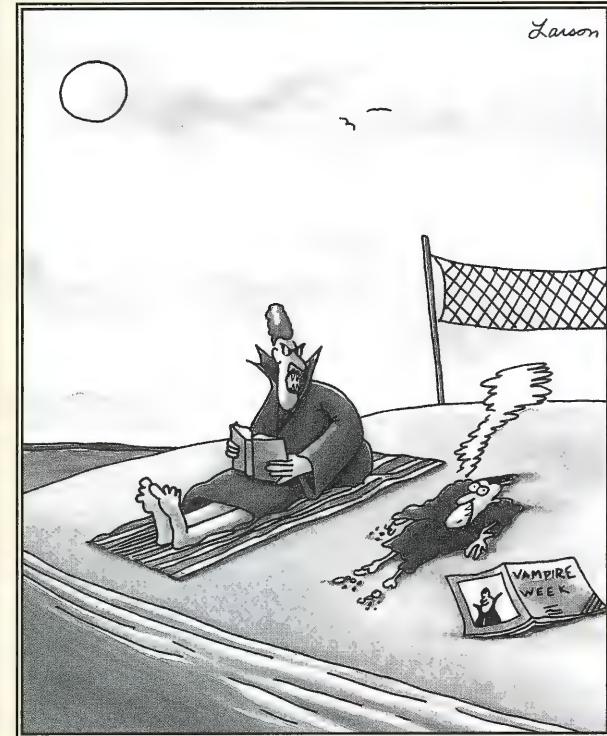
June 1990

6/19/90



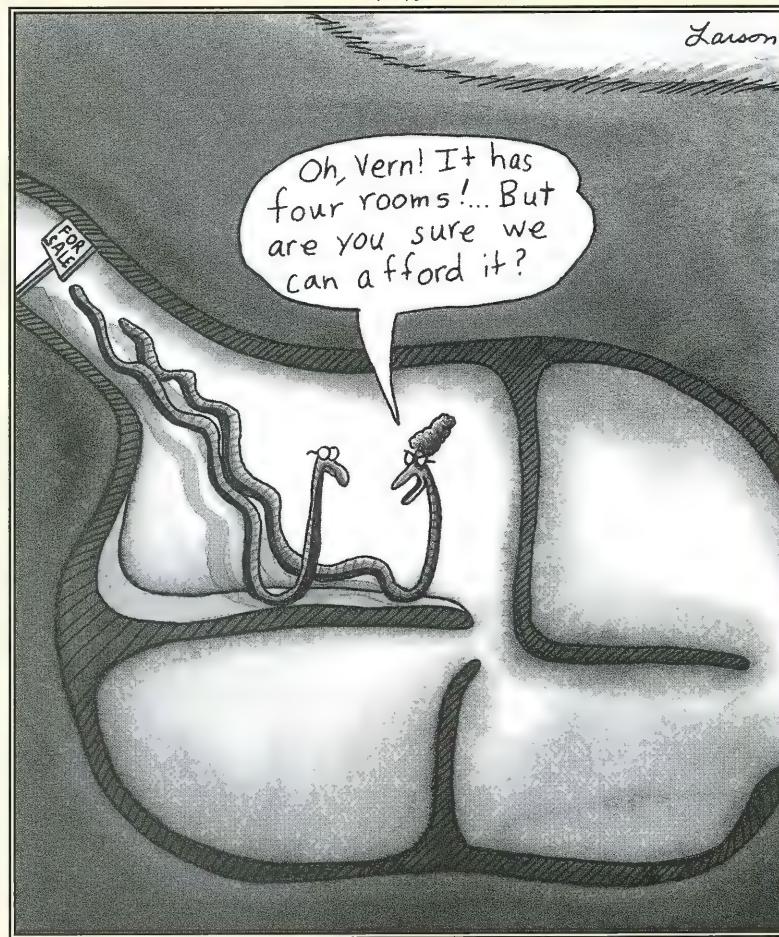
Elephan Gogh

6/22/90

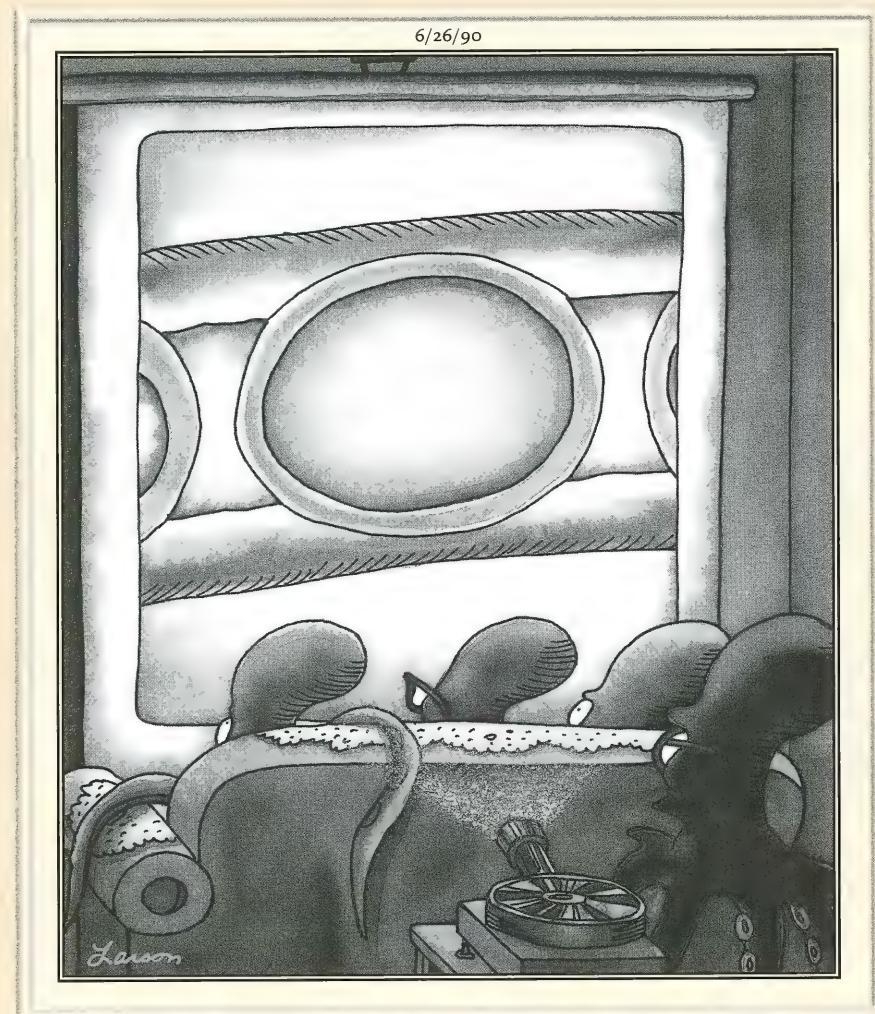


"Well, Donald—forgot your sunblock, I see."

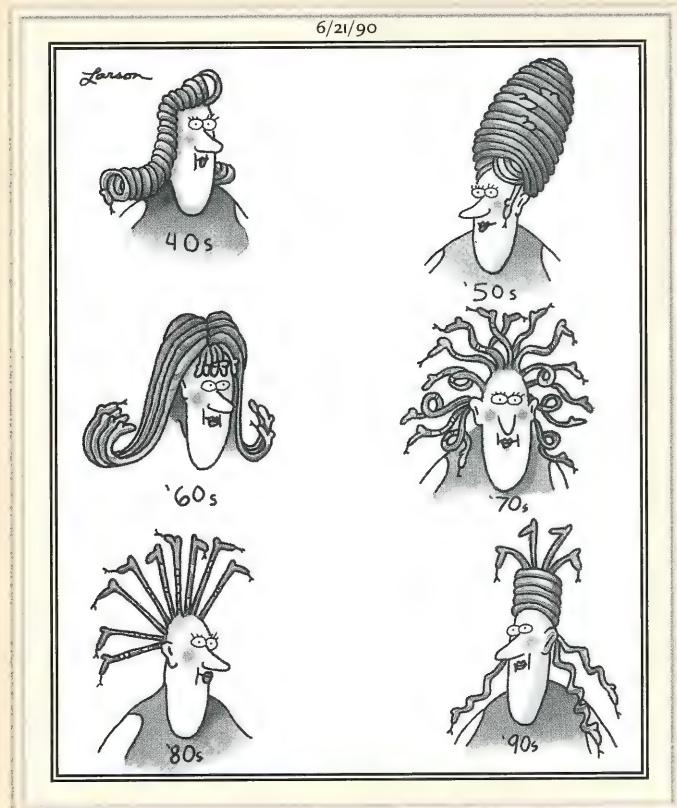
6/20/90



Tapeworms in a cow's stomach



"Again? Crimony! ... How many times did
I have a tentacle over the lens?"



The evolution of Medusa's hair



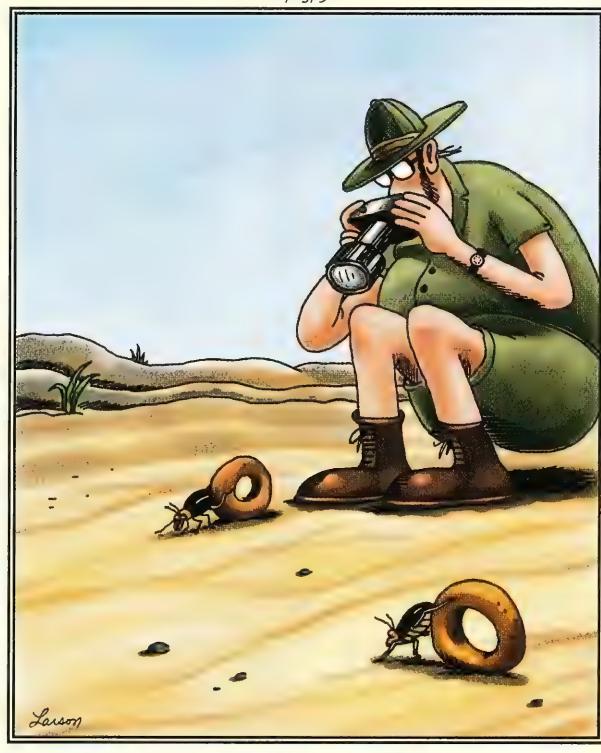
Early shell games

6/29/90



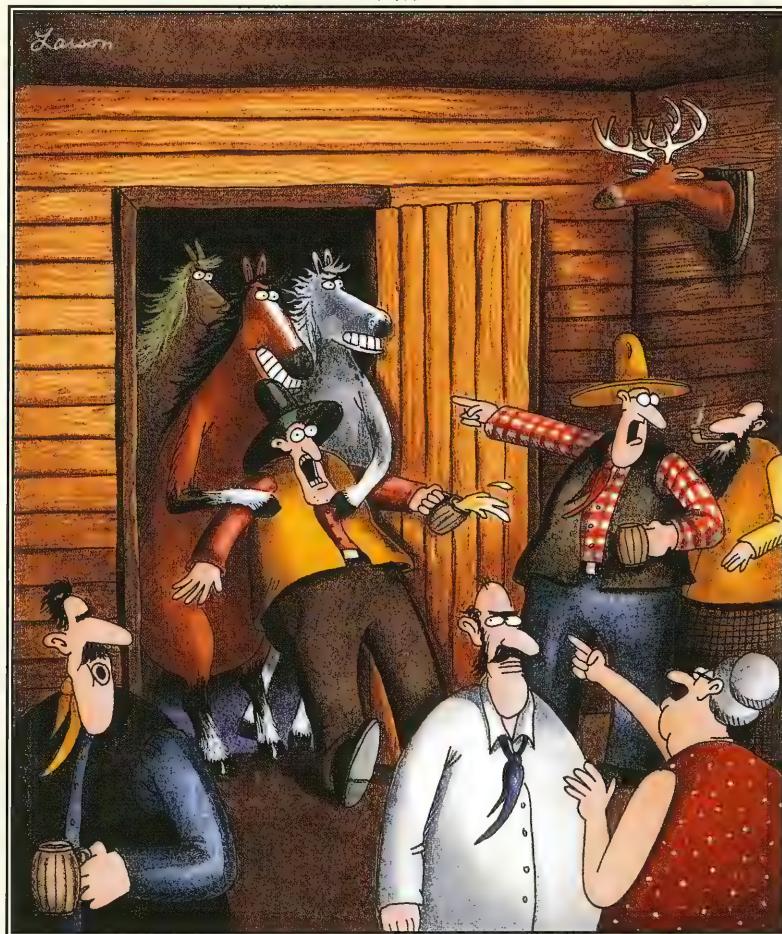
"Okay, Jane, this guy you want me to go out with—you say he lives alone, he doesn't have any friends, and he has a slight frothing problem. ... He's not a rogue, is he?"

6/25/90

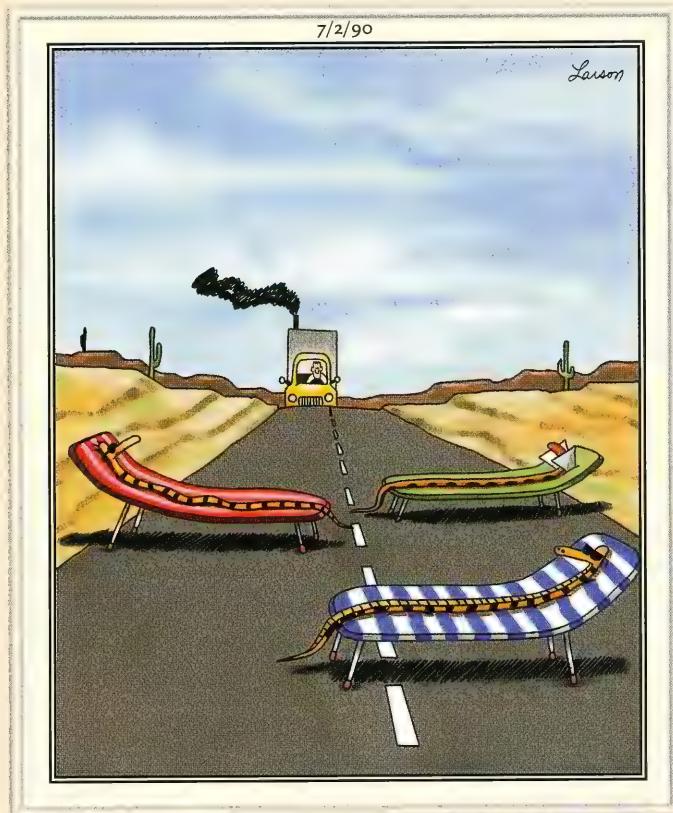
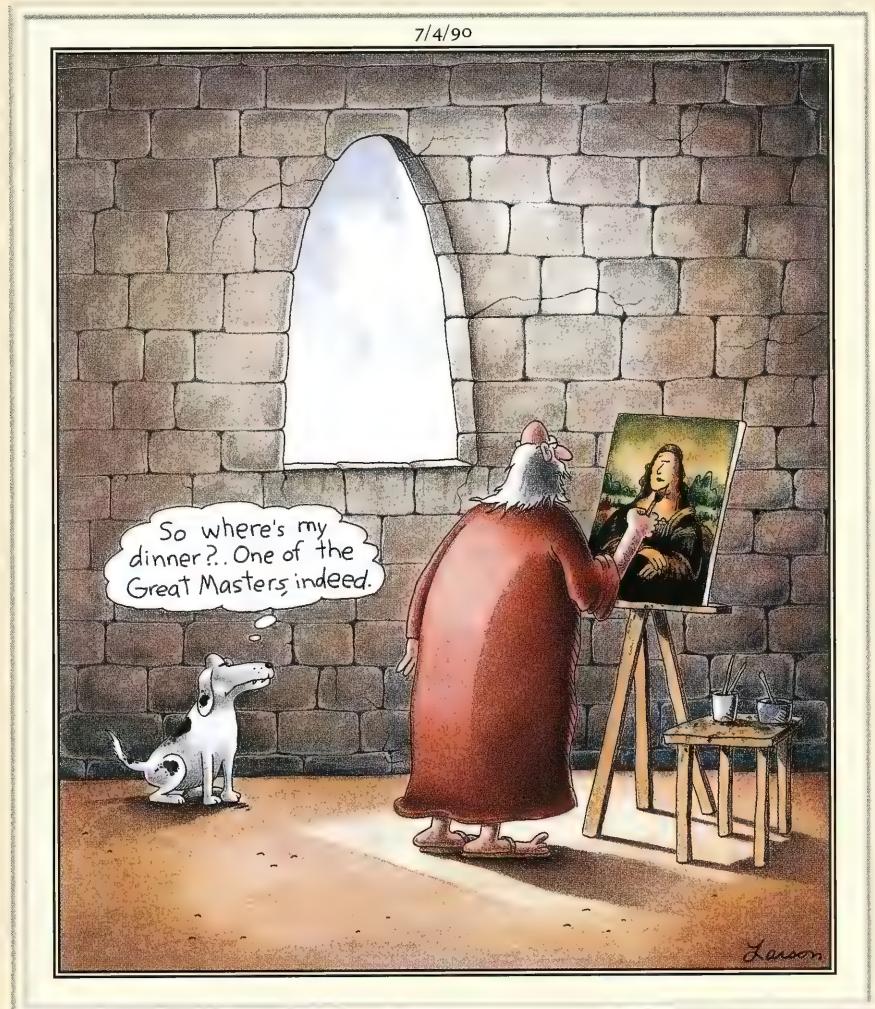


Studying the African bagel beetle

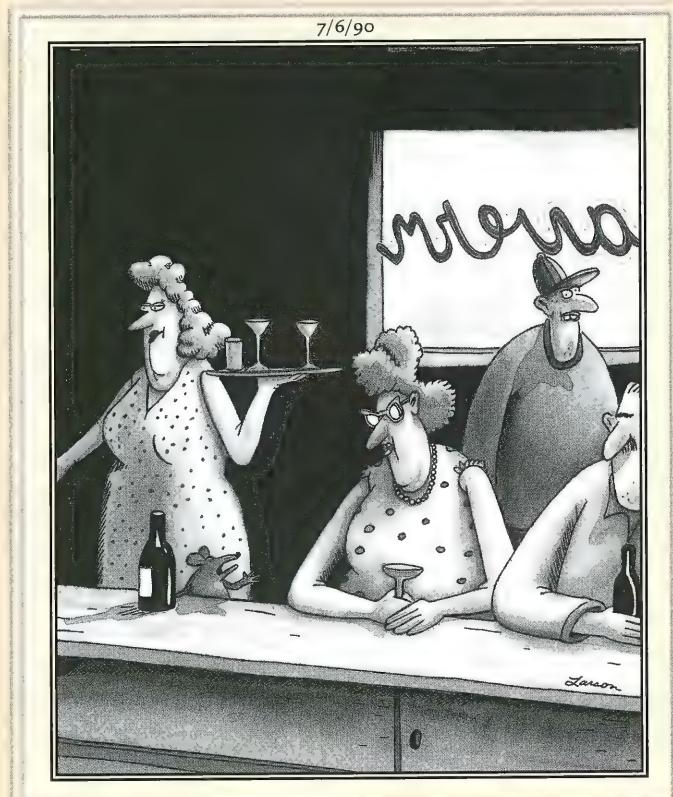
6/27/90



Suddenly, the door was kicked open, and with nostrils flaring and manes flying, wild horses dragged Sam away.

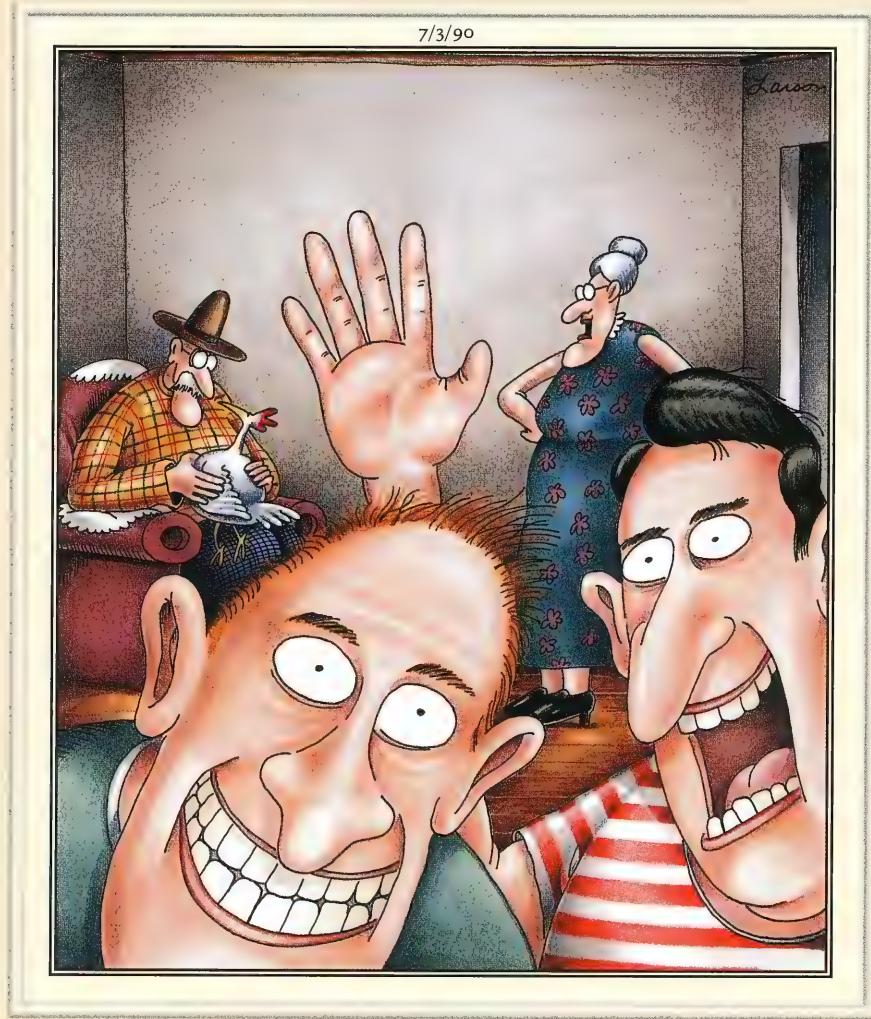


Gus saw them when he crested the hill.
Snakes. Three of them, basking on the road.
Probably diamondbacks.



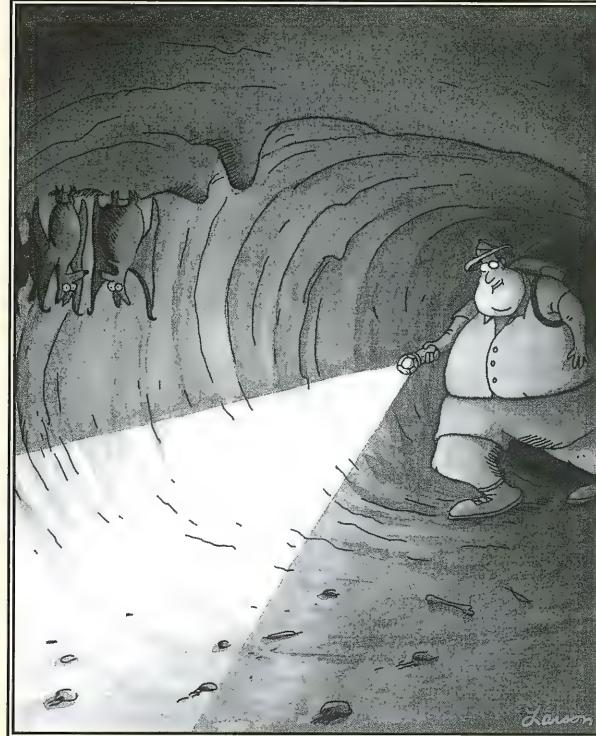
"Well, we could go back to my place, but
you have to understand—I'm serious when I
say it's just a hole in the wall."

July 1990



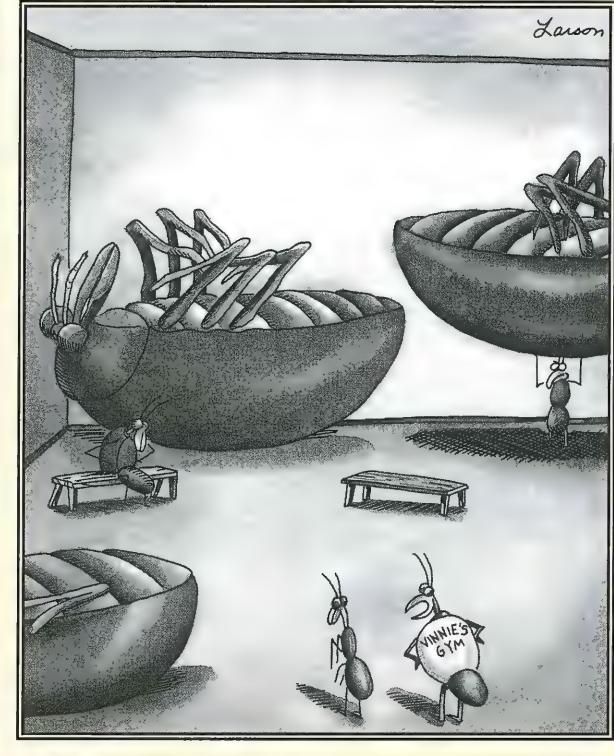
Suddenly, two bystanders stuck their heads inside the frame and ruined one of the funniest cartoons ever.

7/10/90

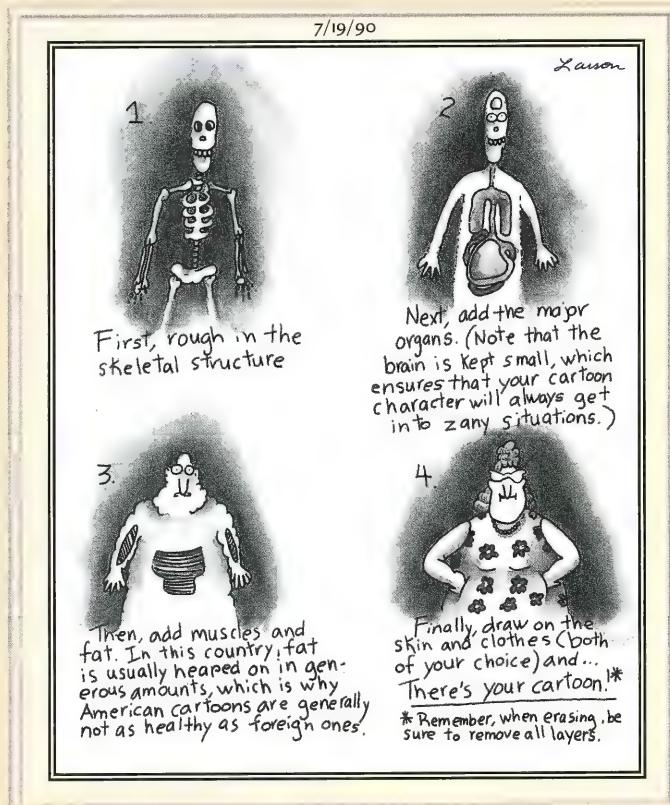
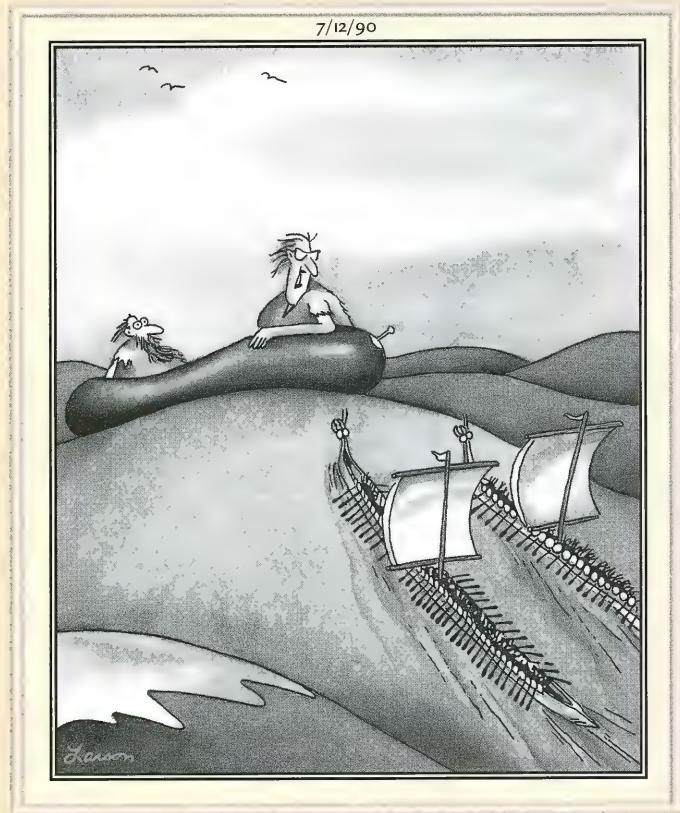
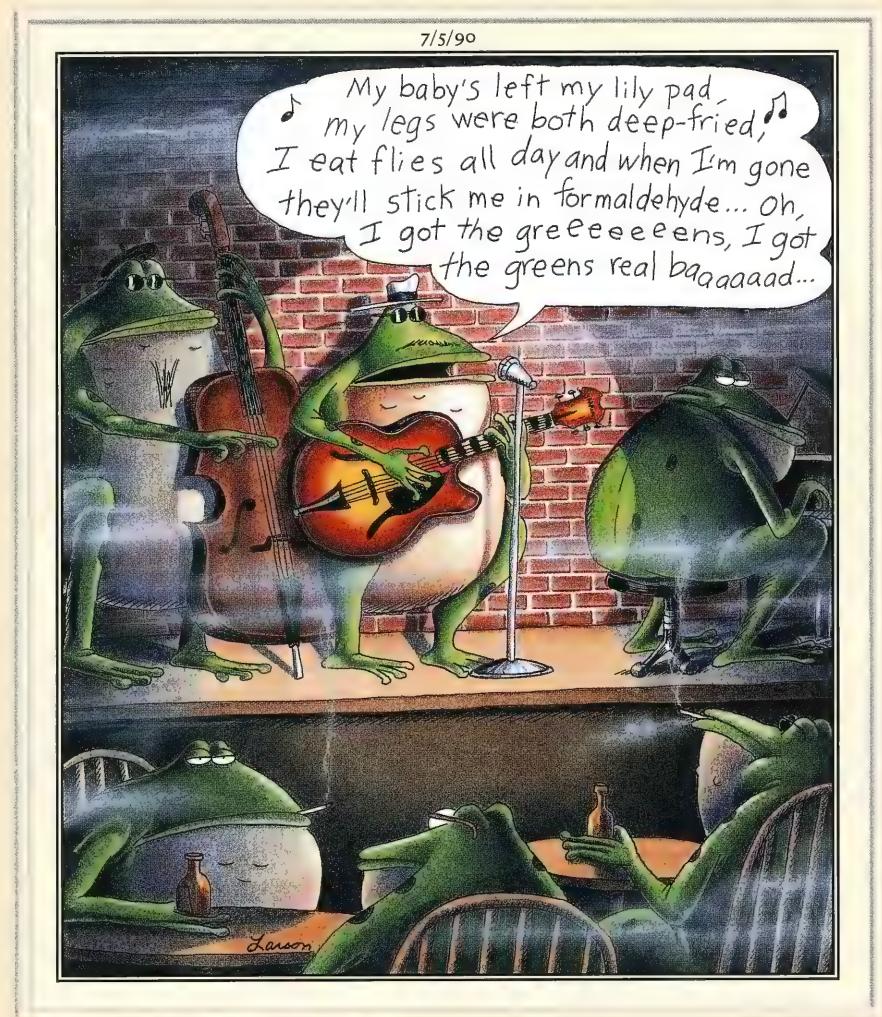


"My sonar's got it at 12 feet away and closing ...
11 feet ... 10 feet ... God, it's enormous!
Nine feet ..."

7/11/90

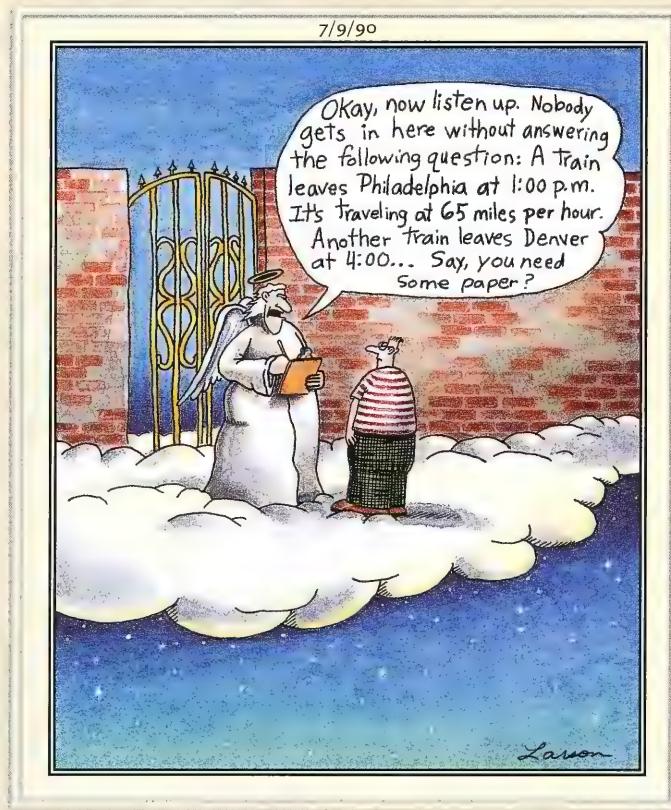
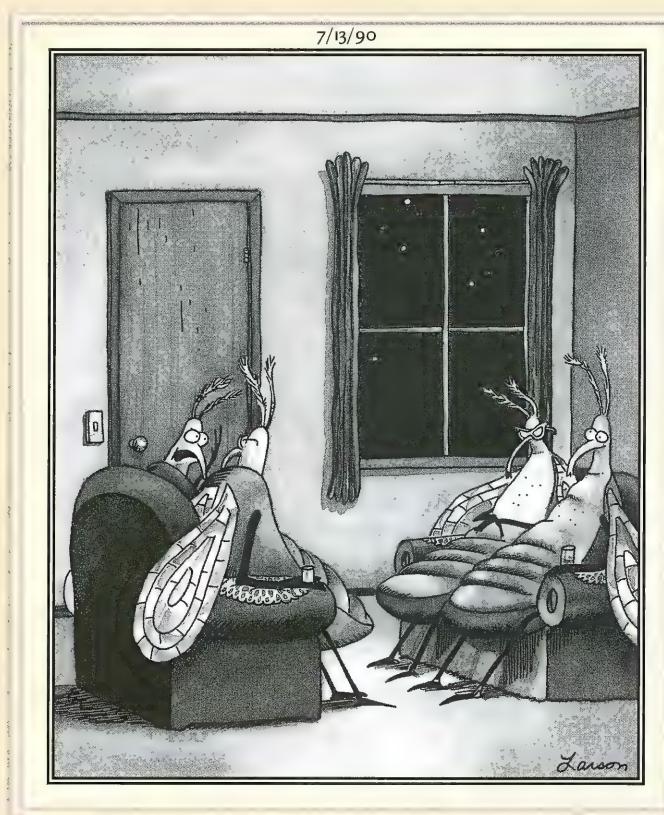


"Now this is our dead beetle room, and
some of these babies are 50 times an ant's
body weight. ... 'Course, we'll want to start
you out on dried ladybugs."



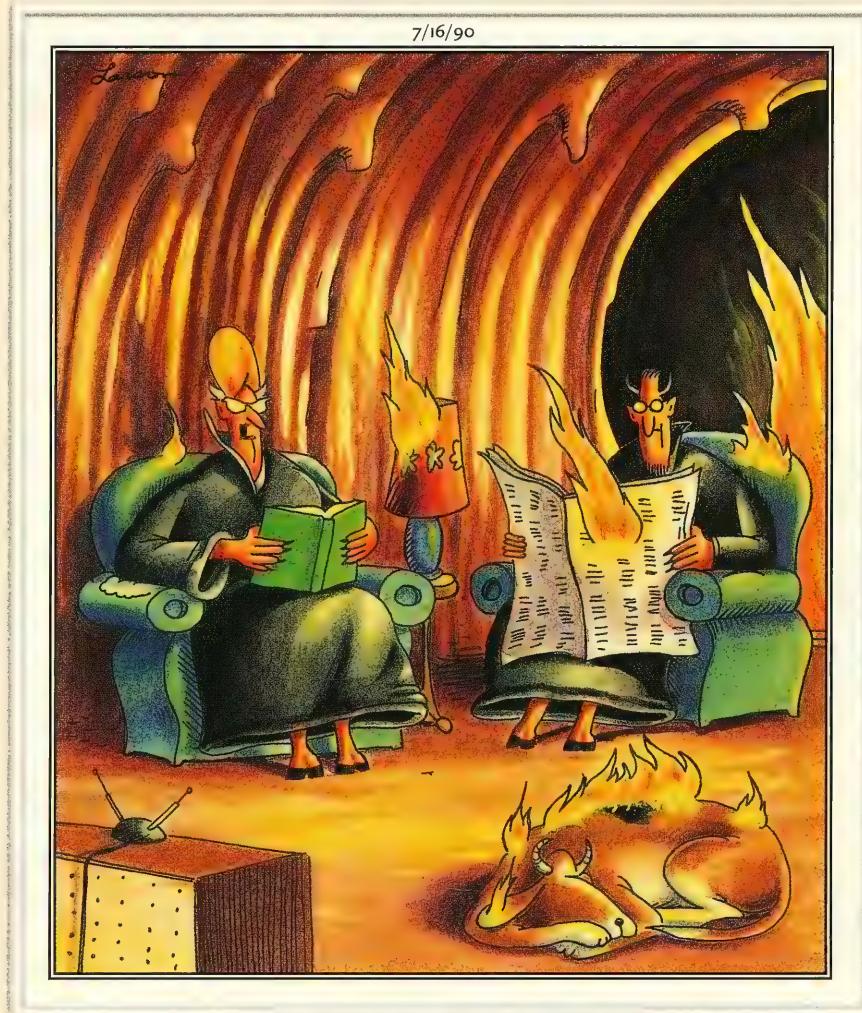
How to draw cartoons

"Now what? ... Oh God, Ernie! Navy ants!"



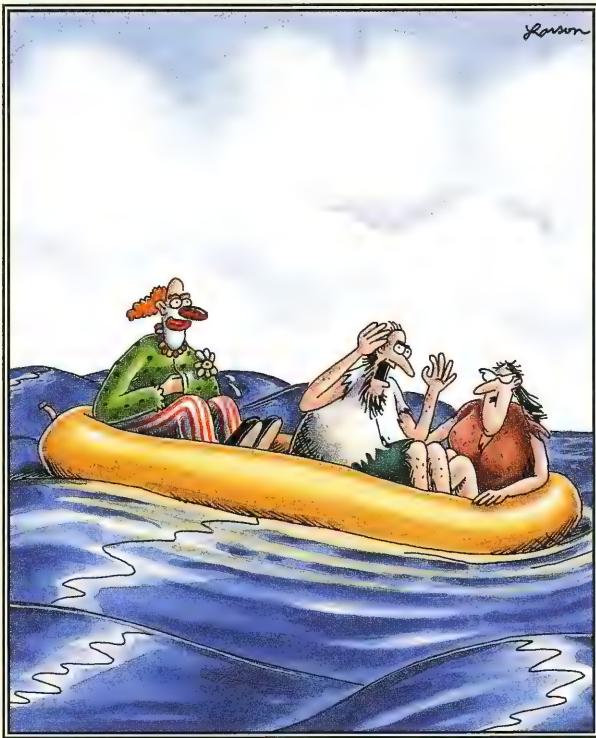
Math phobic's nightmare

"Crimony! Talk about overstaying your welcome! ... John, open the door and turn the porch light on—see if that gets rid of them."



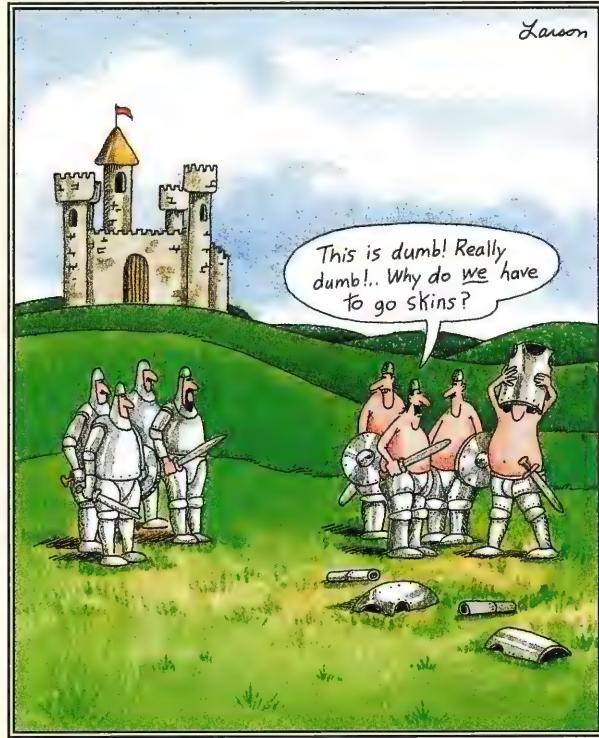
"Uh-oh, Bob, the dog's on fire. ... I think it's your turn to put him out."

7/18/90



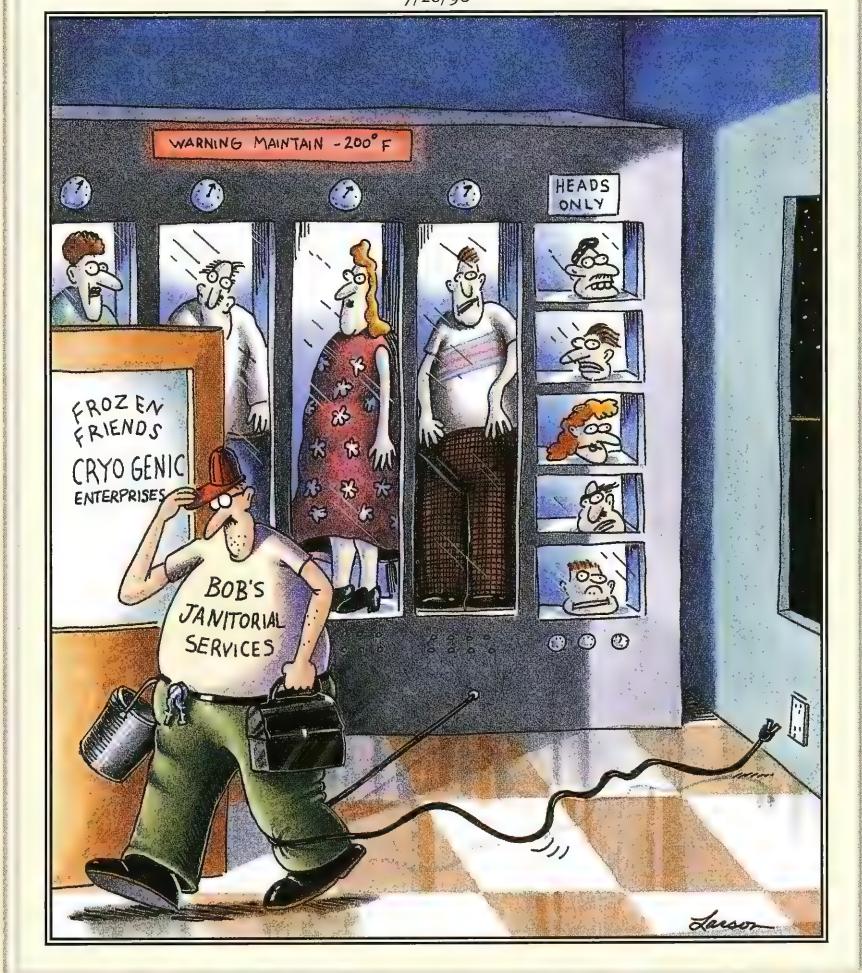
"There! I felt it again, Donna! ...
Raindrops! Raindrops!"

7/25/90



Medieval pickup battles

7/26/90

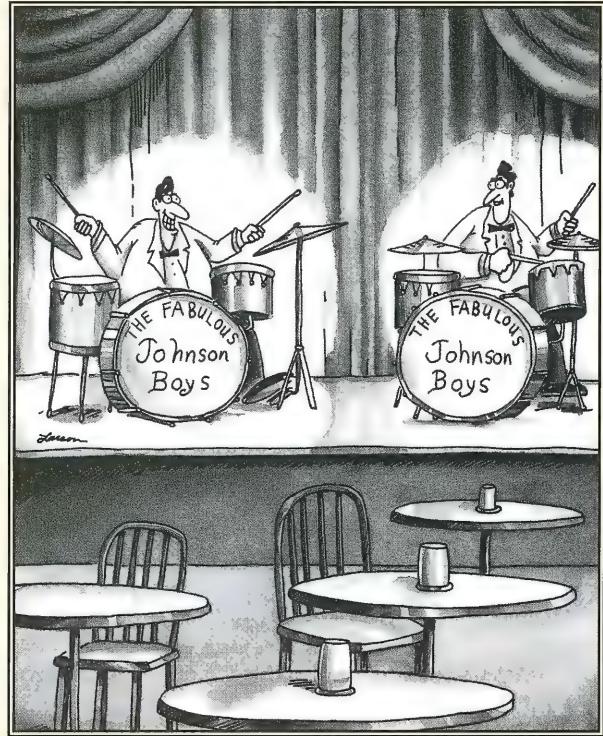


7/20/90



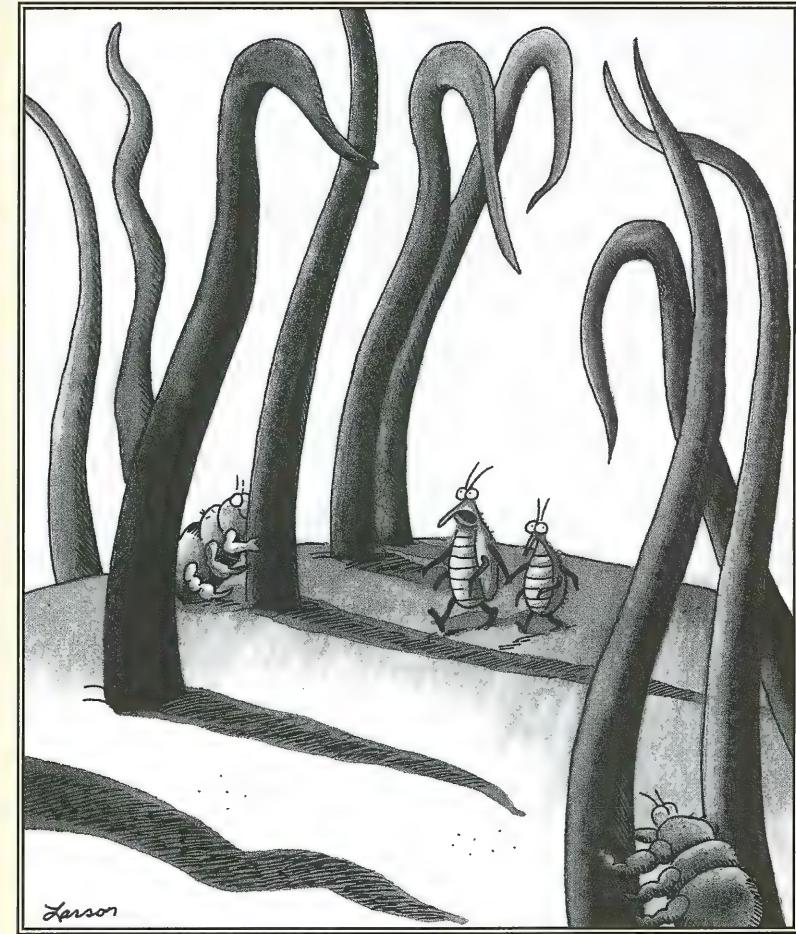
How rhinos are incited to charge

7/23/90

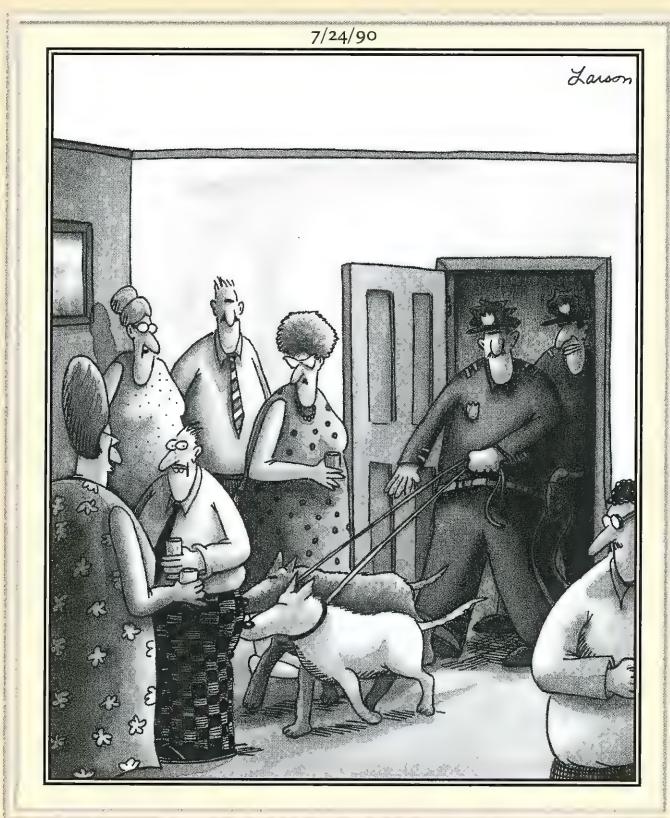


Failed lounge acts

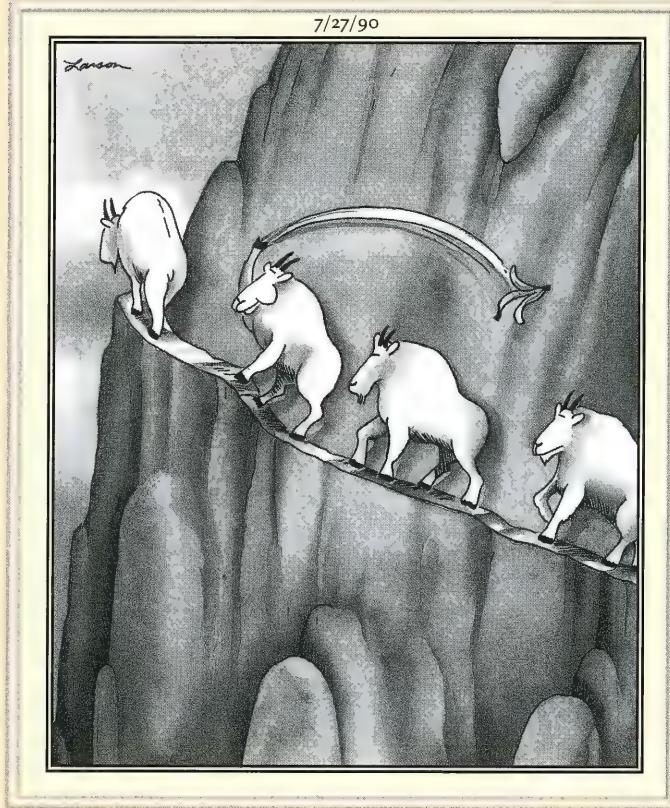
7/17/90



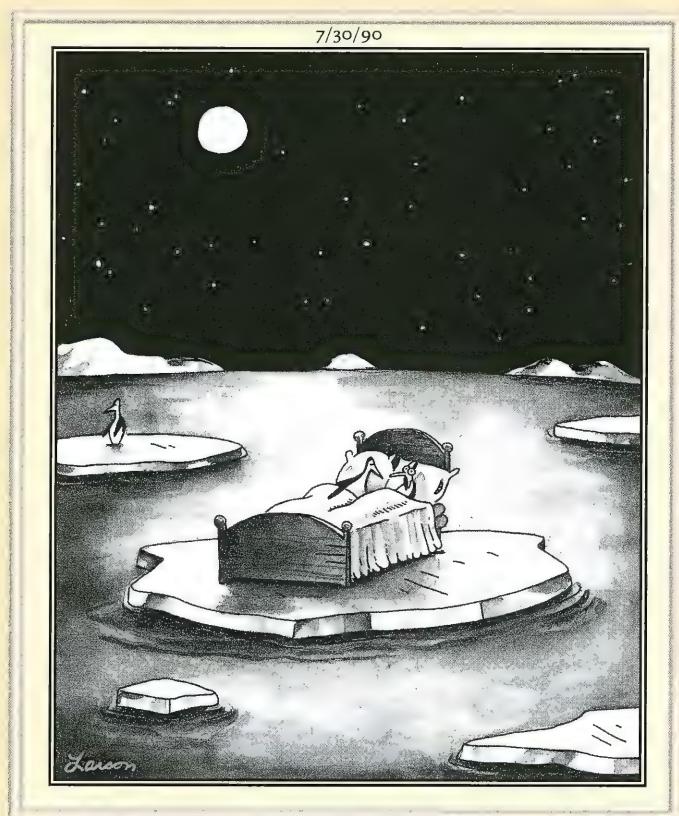
"Frances, I've got a feeling we're not on Toto anymore."



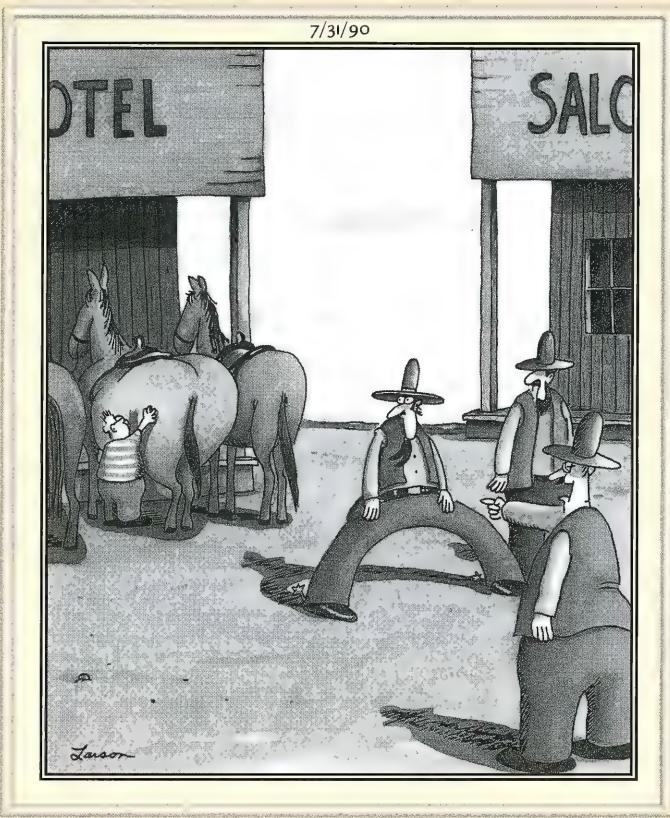
Suddenly, and to Rodney's horror, the police arrived with nerd-sniffing dogs.



Irresponsible mountain goats



"Wowow! ... Man, Lola, your feet are always so dang warm!"



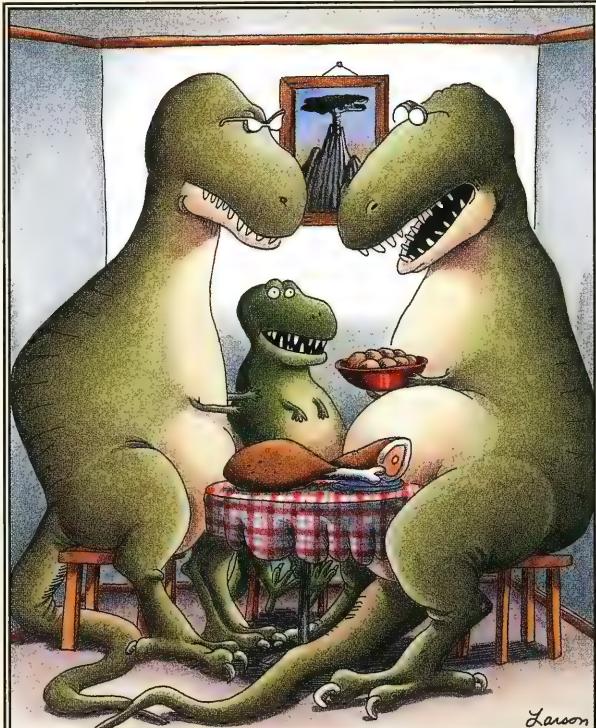
"Dave! Ain't that your horse that kid is messin' with?"

8/1/90



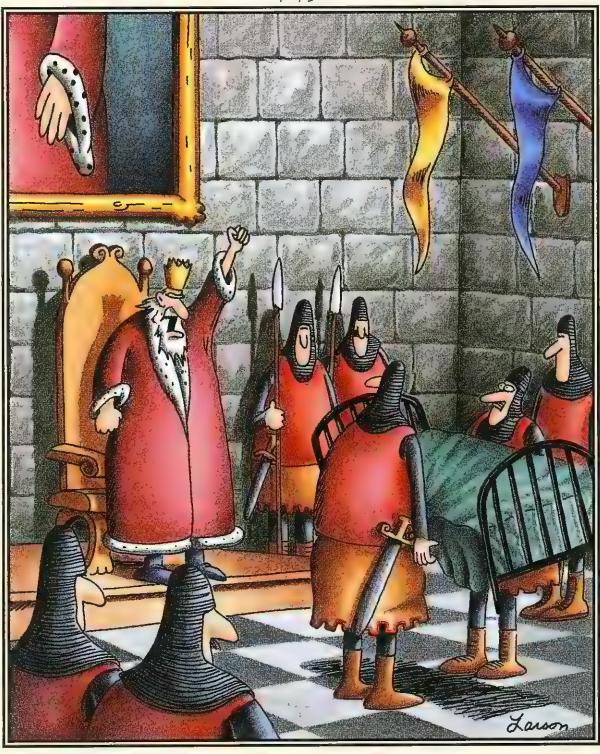
"Oh, Helen! You're pregnant? That's wonderful! ... At first, I was taking you quite literally when you said you had one in the oven!"

8/2/90



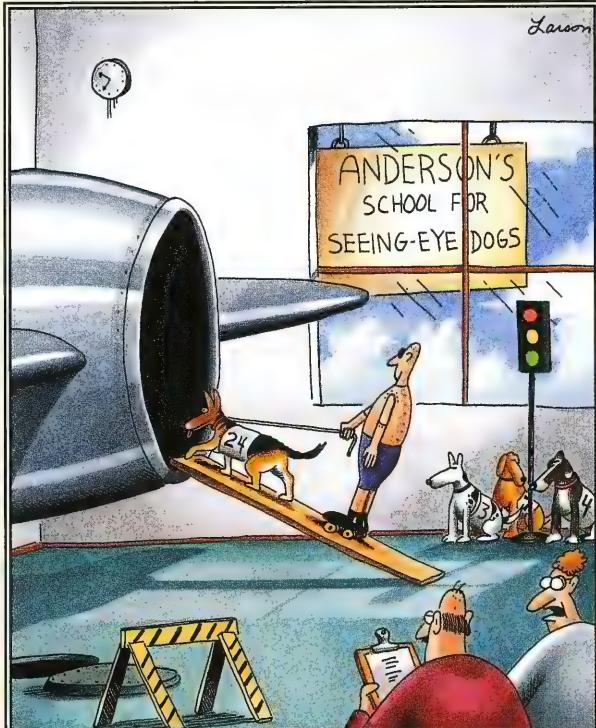
"Hey! I'm trying to pass the potatoes! ... Remember, my forearms are just as useless as yours!"

8/6/90

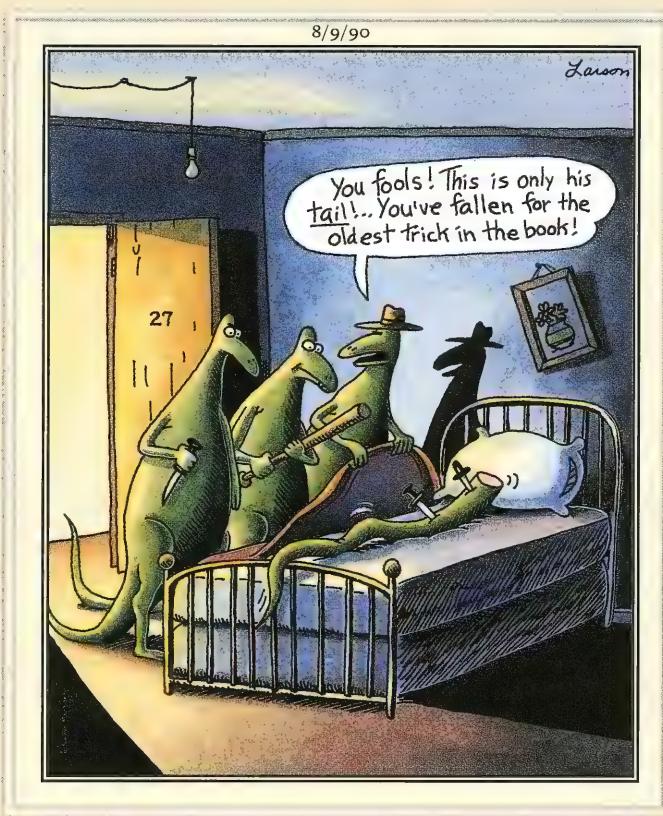


"I said his head, you idiots! Bring me the cur's head!"

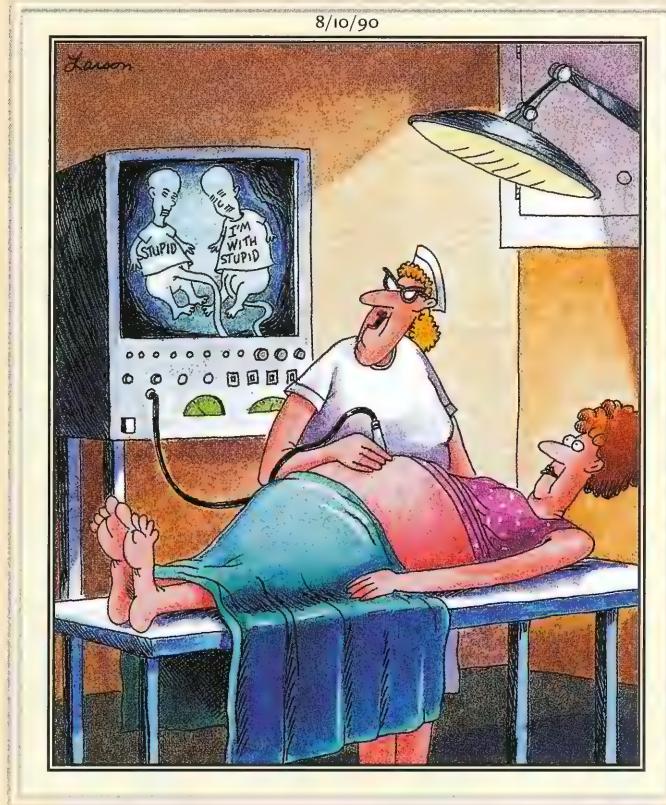
8/8/90



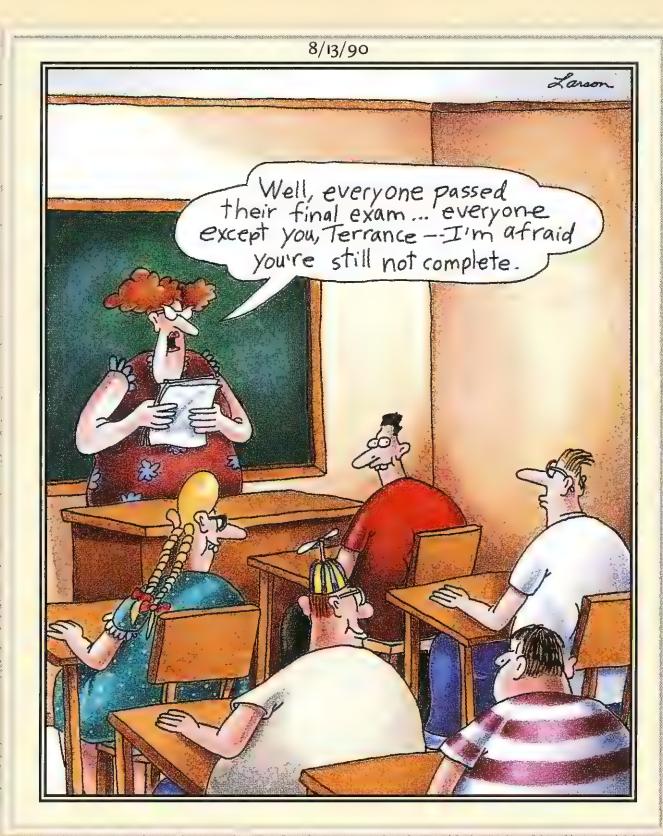
"Well, scratch number 24. He did pretty good, though—right up to the jet engine test."



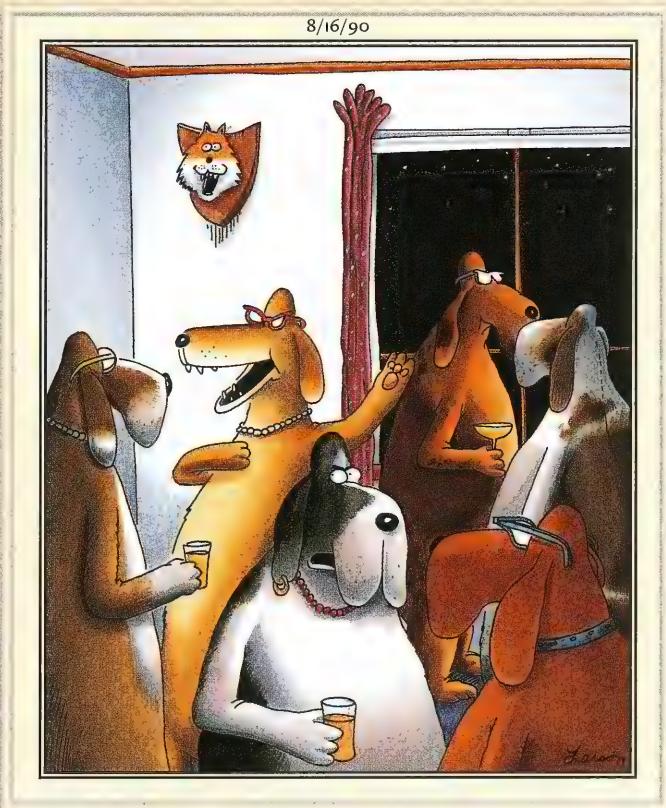
Lizard thugs



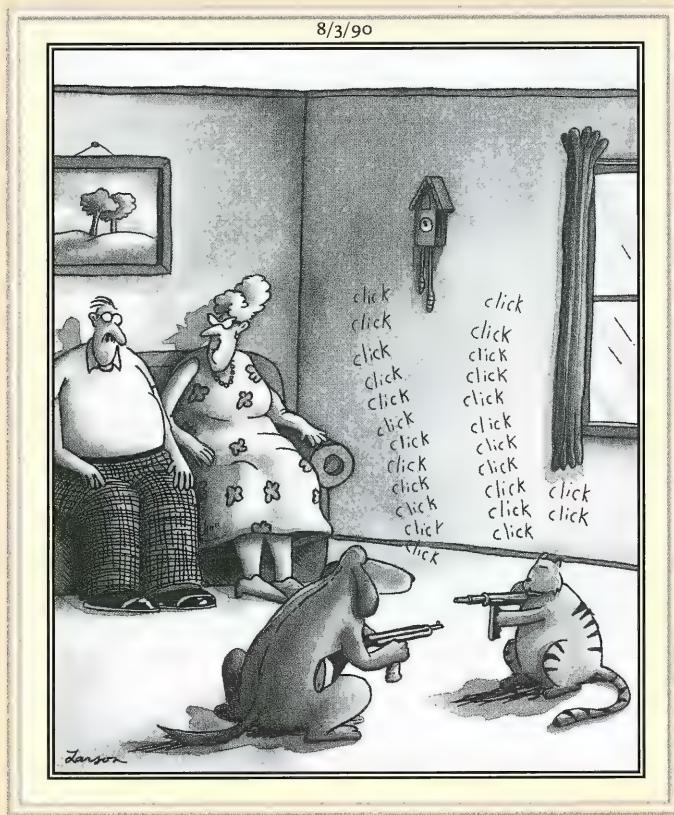
"There you go, Mrs. Eagen—you can clearly see both twins on the monitor."



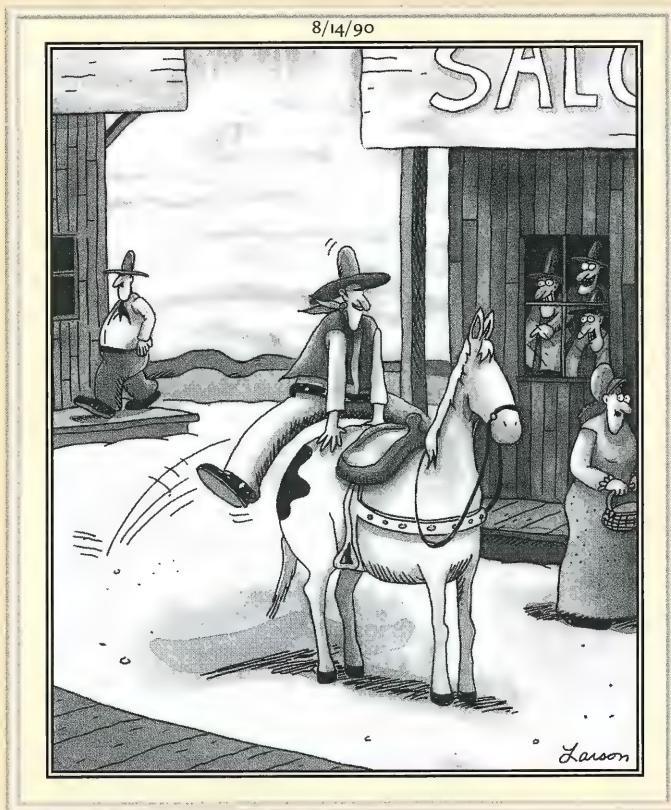
Fool school



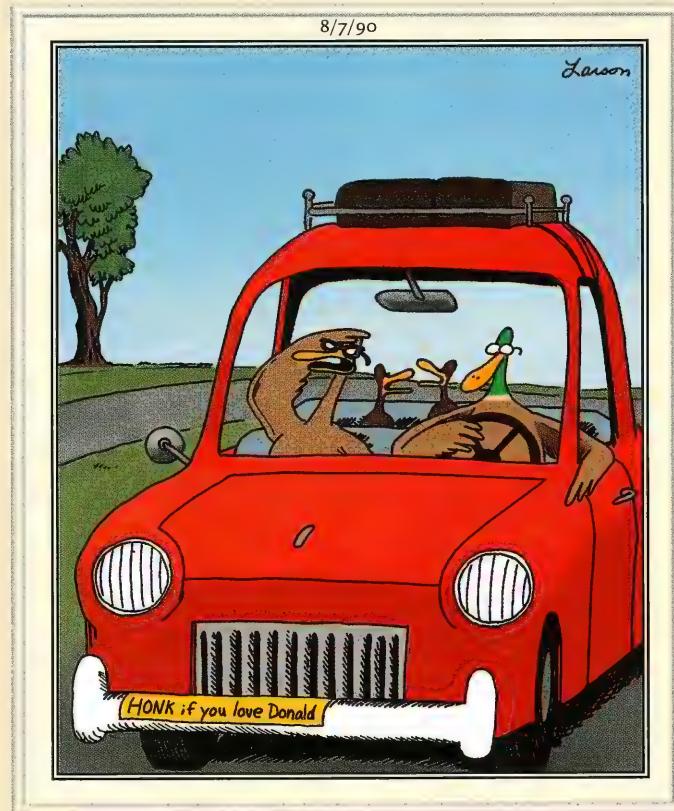
"Well, just look at her and then tell me she didn't have her jowls lifted."



"Introducing automatic weapons to a couple of dumb animals was irresponsible to begin with, Frank—but, my God! To think you almost left the bullets in!"



In the Old West, cowboy show-offs often fell victim to the old whoopee saddle gag.



"Oh God, George! Stop! Stop the car! ... I've got another migration headache!"



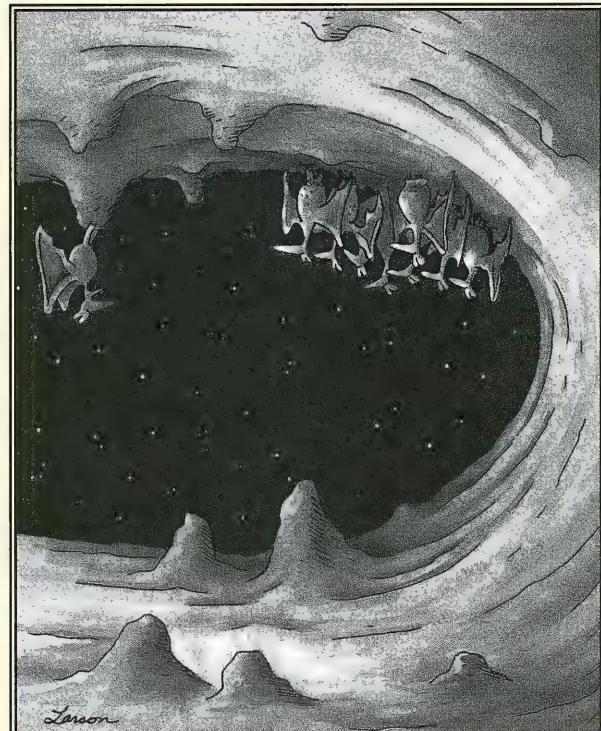
On what was to be his last day on the job, Gus is caught asleep at the switch.

8/21/90



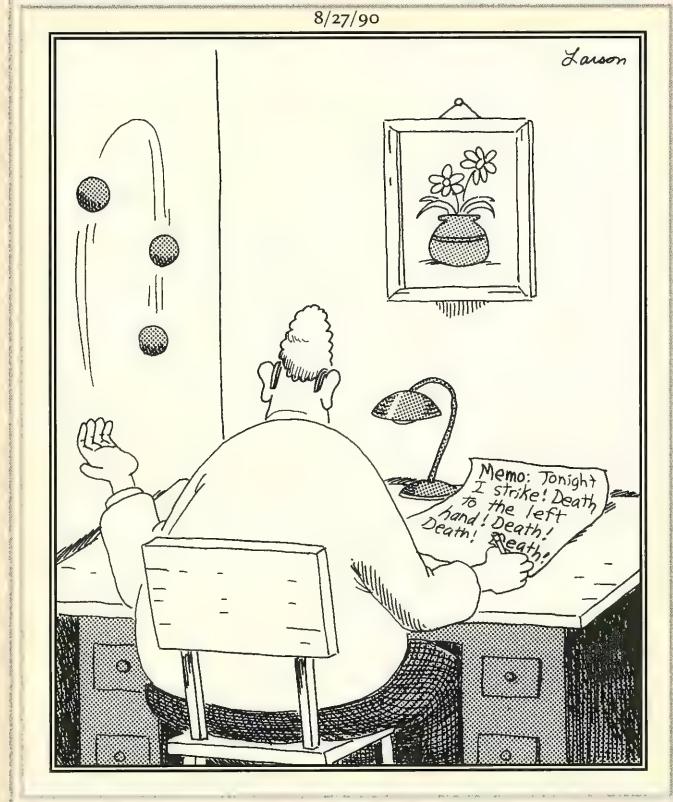
Leon Redbone's workout video

8/22/90



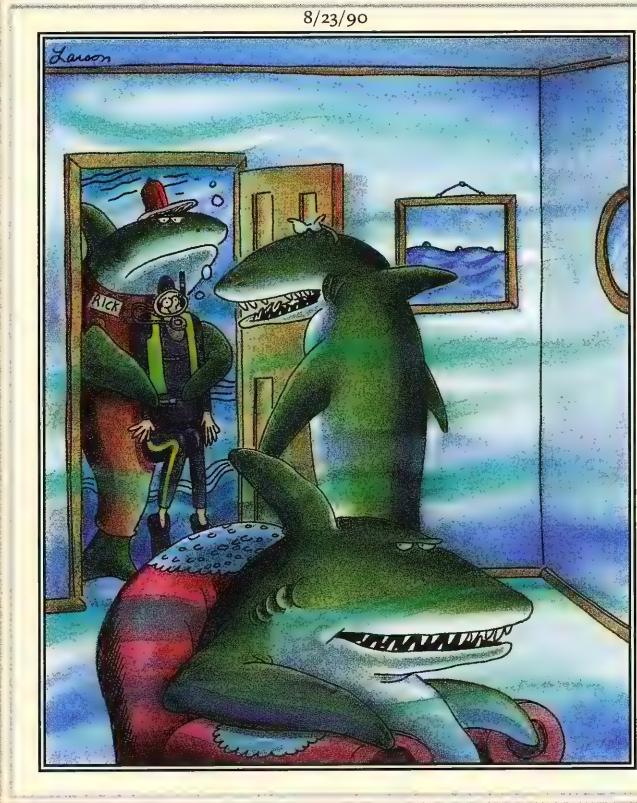
"And, during my term, I'm looking forward to a kinder, gentler cave, with a thousand points of darkness showing us the way."

8/27/90



Innocent and carefree, Stuart's left hand didn't know what the right was doing.

8/23/90

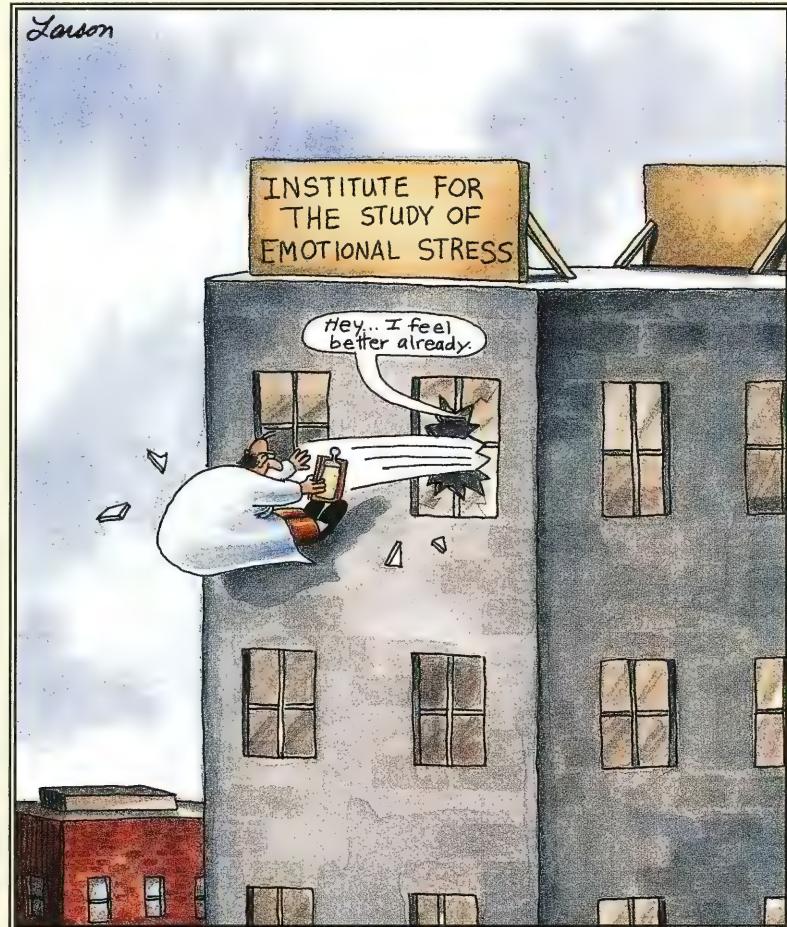


"That was fast! ... Gunther!
The Diver Delivery guy is here."

August 1990

8/17/90

Larson



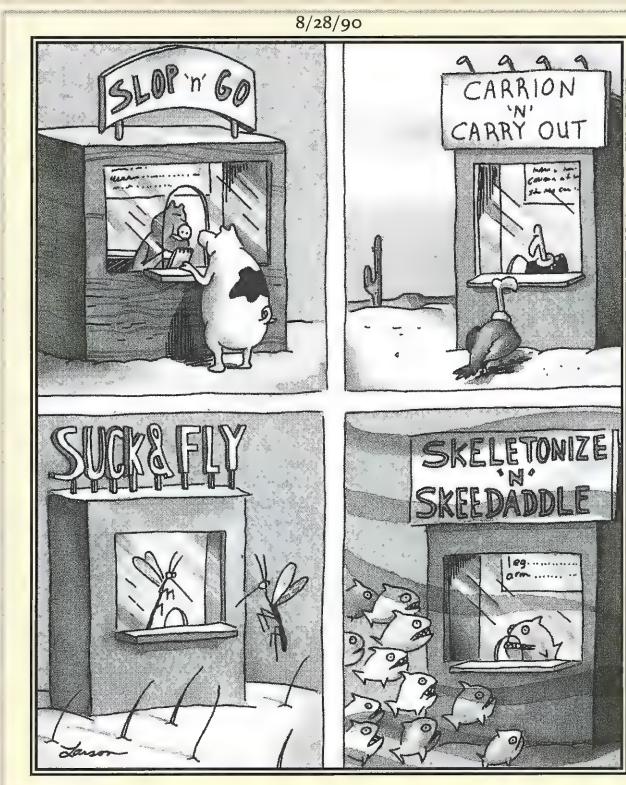
8/24/90

Larson

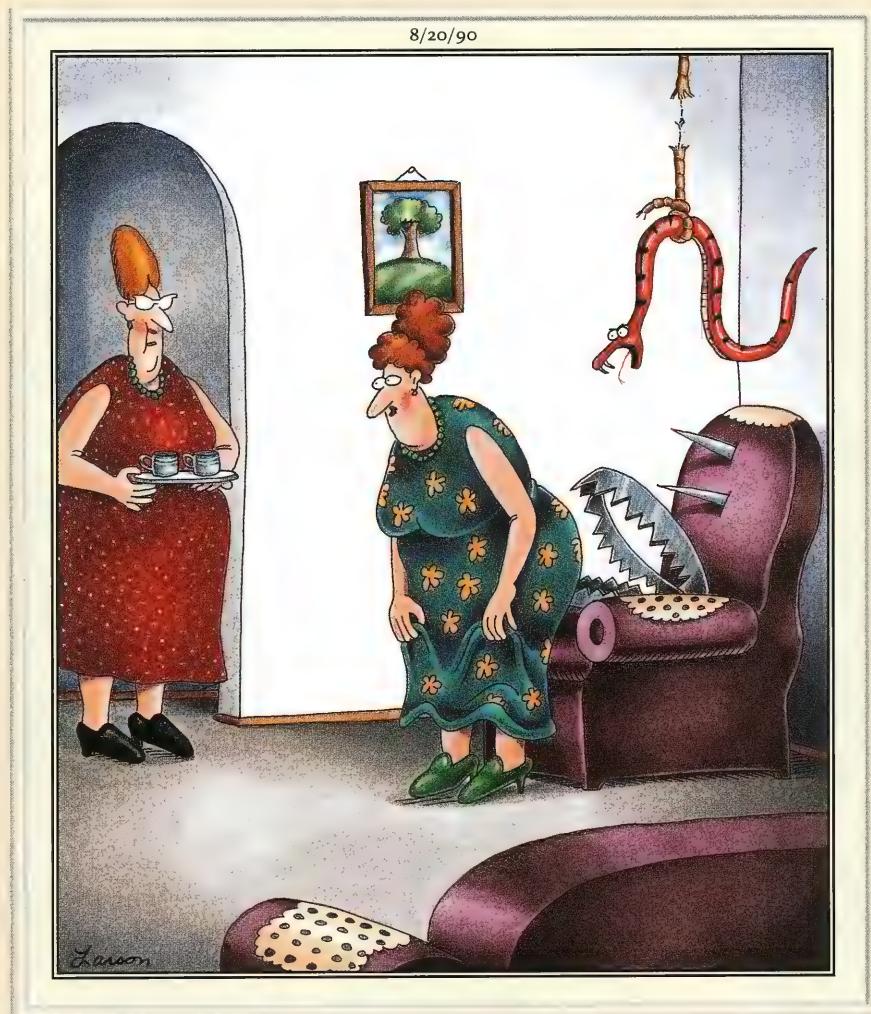


"Hey! What's the matter? ... There's only three of us here! C'mon! ... It's gonna be darrrrrk soon!"

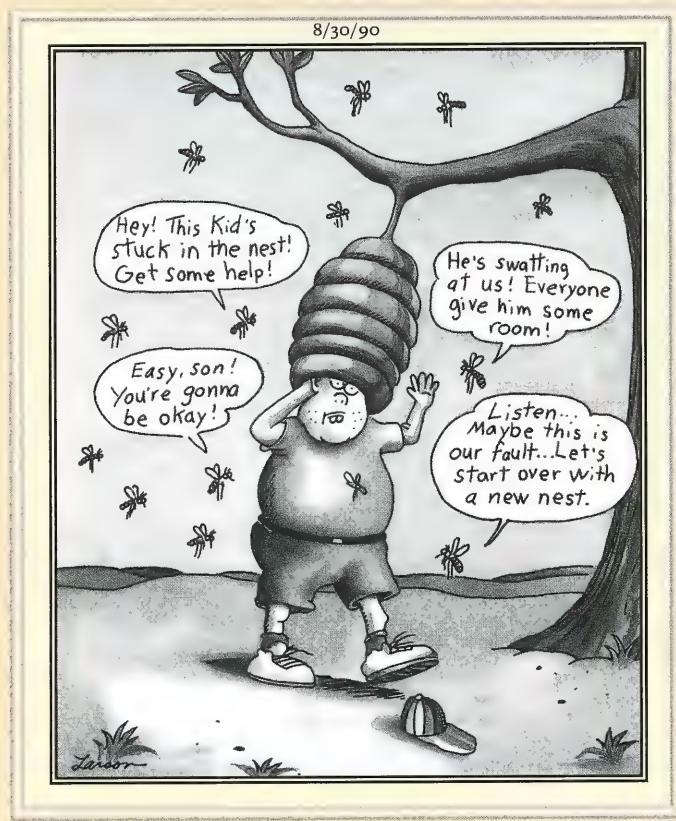
8/28/90



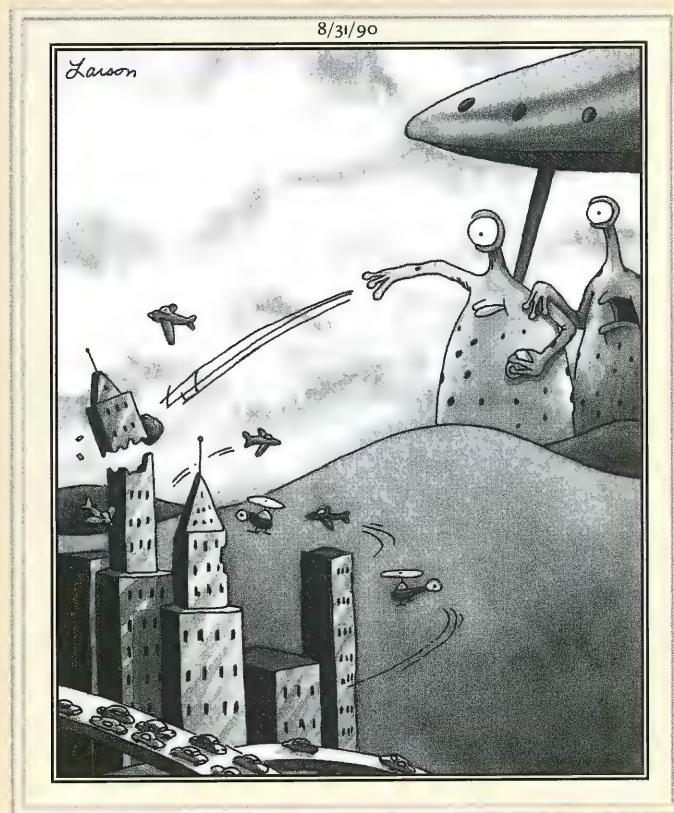
Animal fast-food joints



"Oh, wait, Doreen—don't sit there. ...
That chair's just not safe."



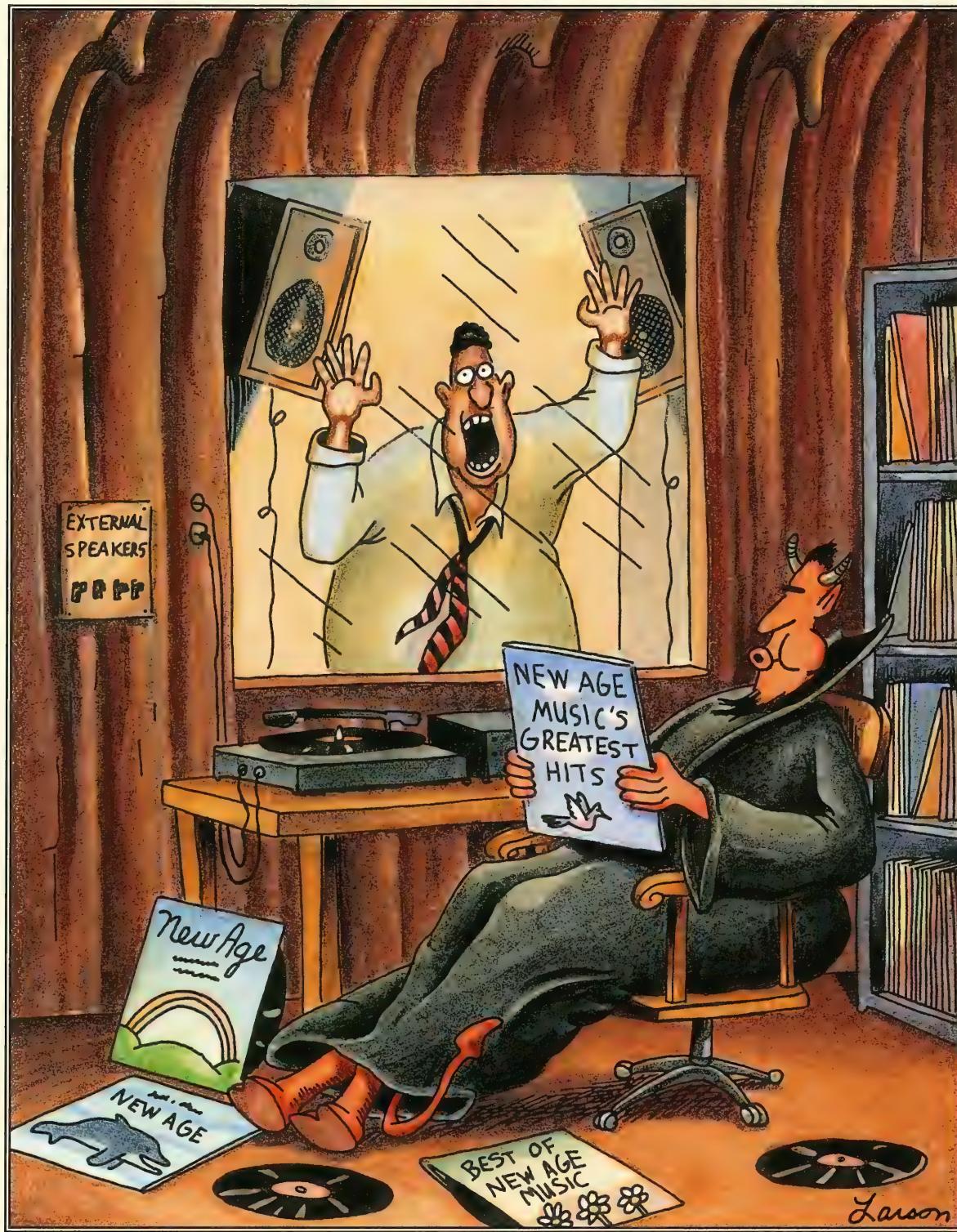
Hornet goody two-shoes



"Ooo! That one got 'em stirred up,
Zangorn! Let's blow!"

August 1990

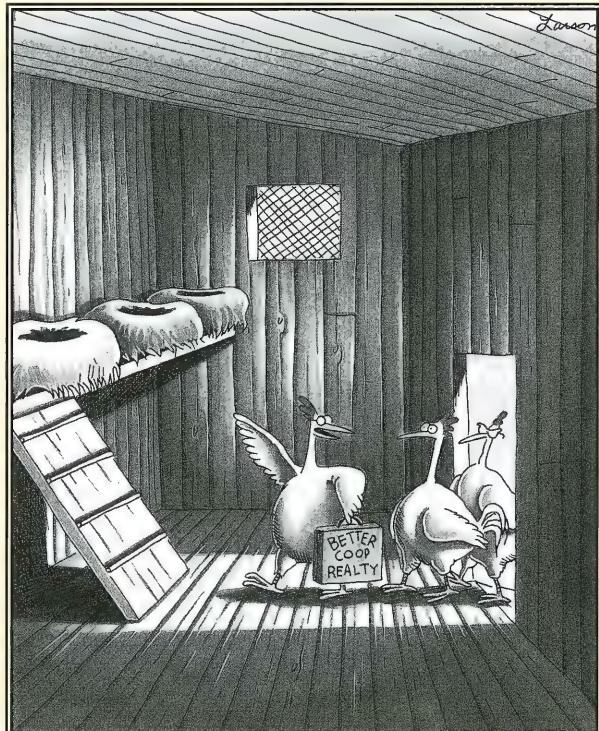
8/29/90



Charlie Parker's private hell

*Editor's note: Gary leaves for a
one-month vacation.*

10/1/90



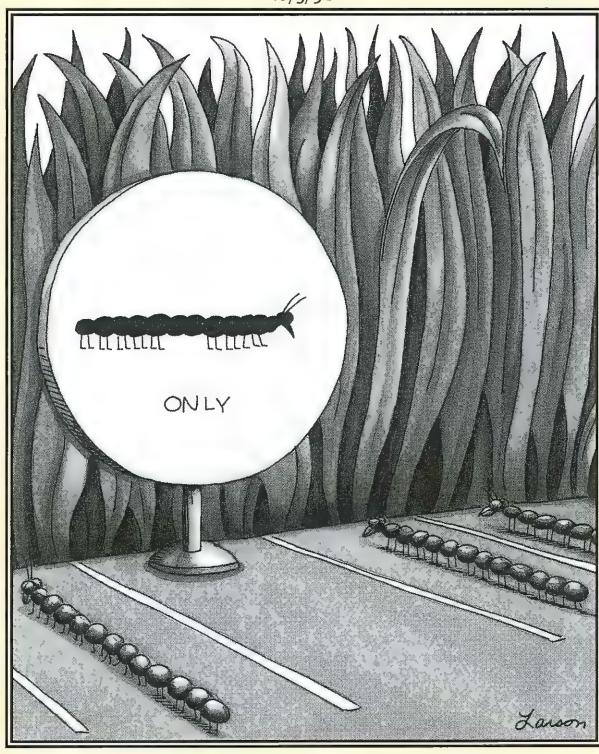
"You're in luck! This place just came on the market a few days ago. ... The previous owners had their heads chopped off."

10/2/90



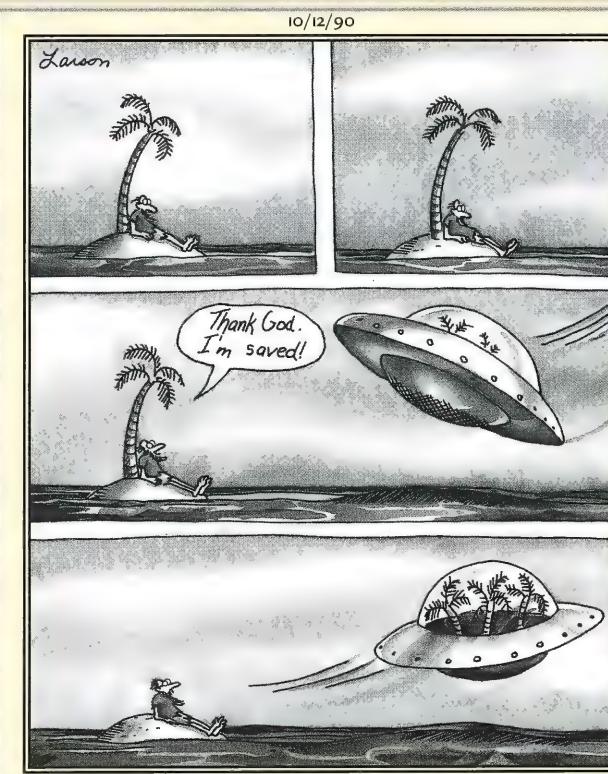
A day in the Invisible Man's household

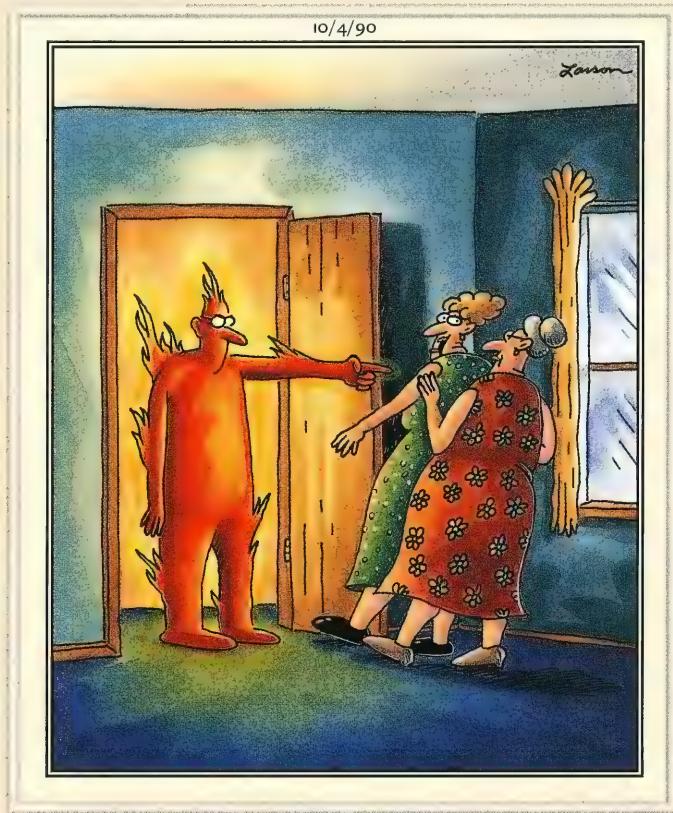
10/3/90



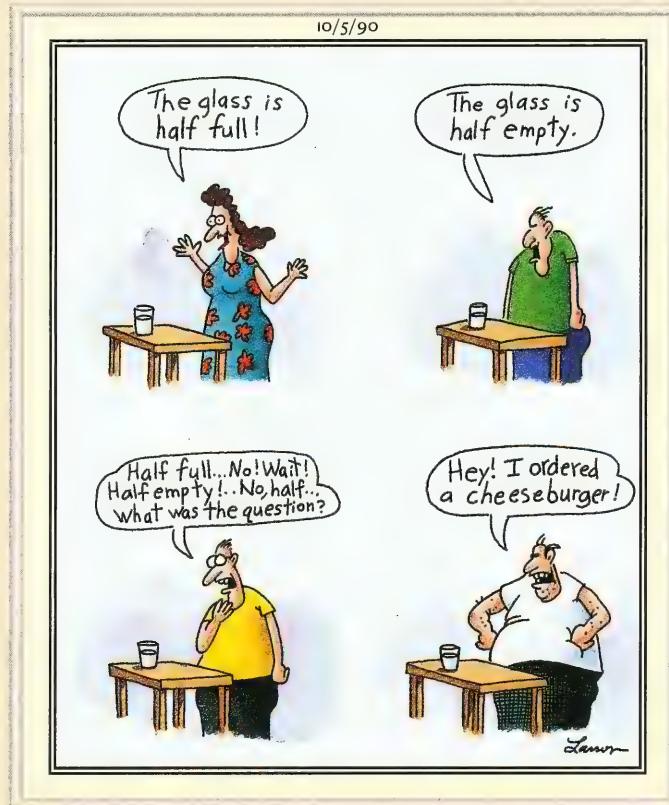
Centipede parking lots

10/12/90

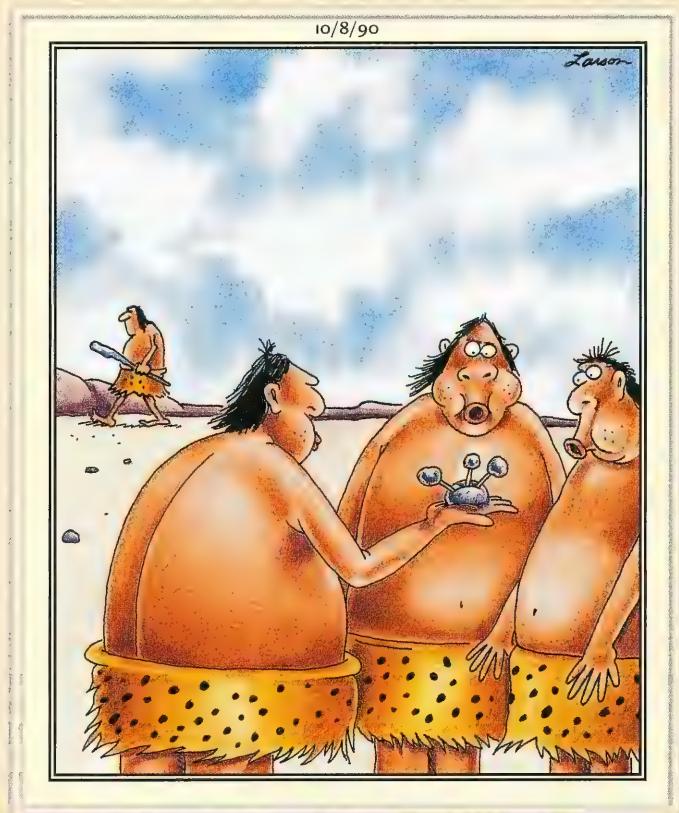




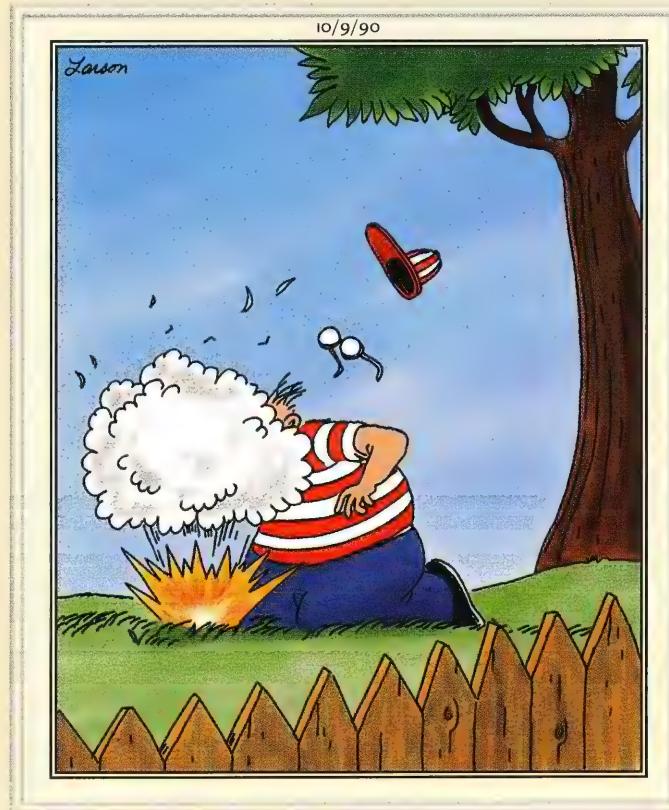
"Step back, Loretta! ... It's a red-hot poker!"



The four basic personality types



Danook shows off his Swiss Army Rock.



Each time the click beetle righted itself, Kyle would flip it over again—until something went dreadfully wrong.

10/17/90

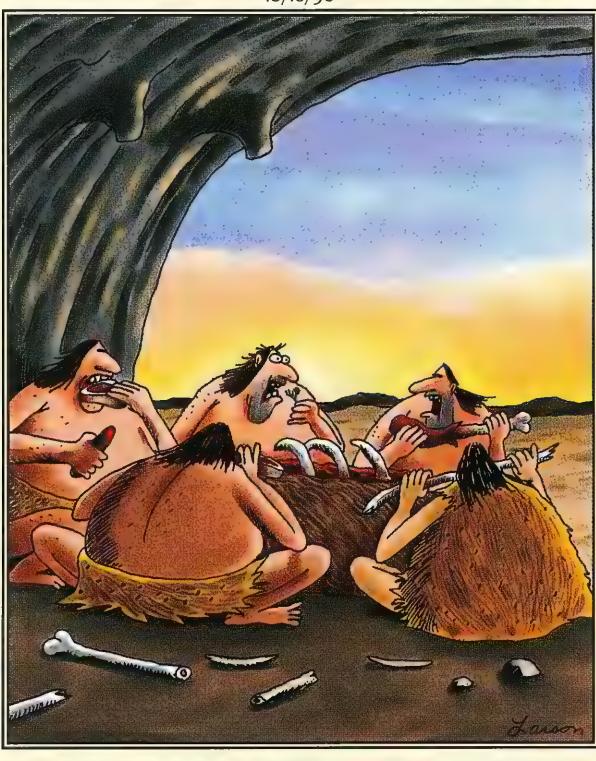


Llamas at home

10/19/90

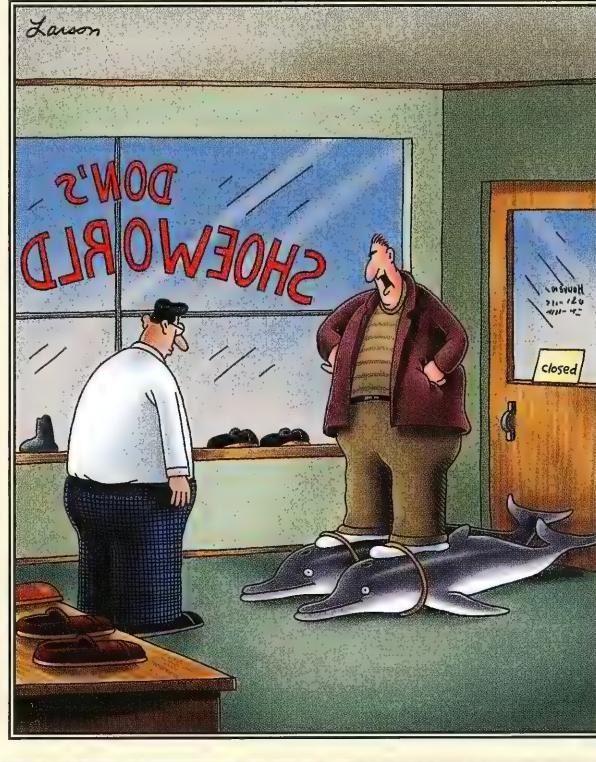


10/16/90



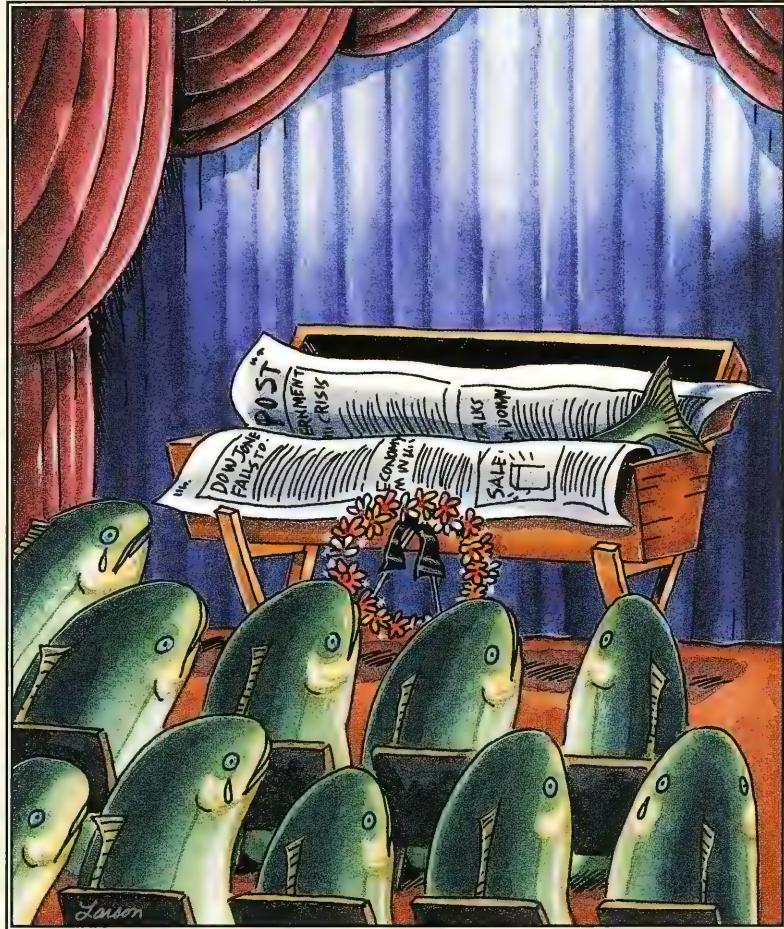
"Zak! Don't eat parsley! ... Just for looks!"

10/11/90



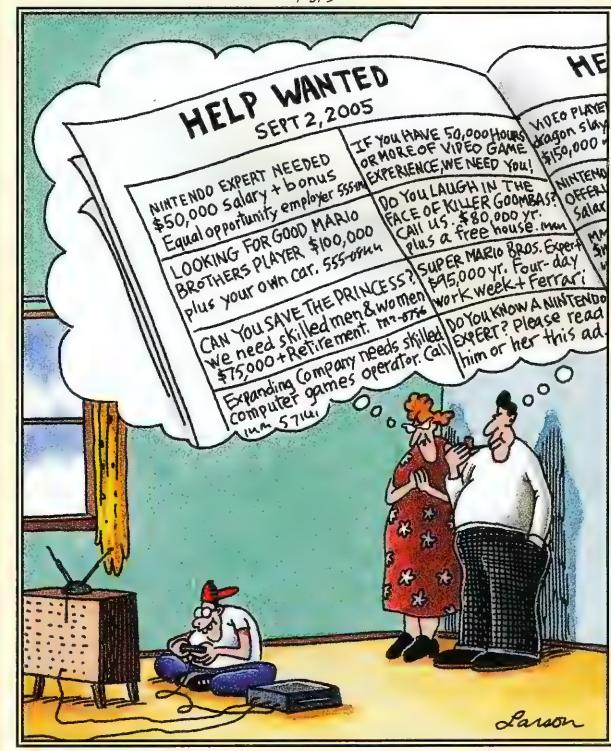
"Listen—I bought these here yesterday, and the dang things won't stop squeaking!"

10/10/90



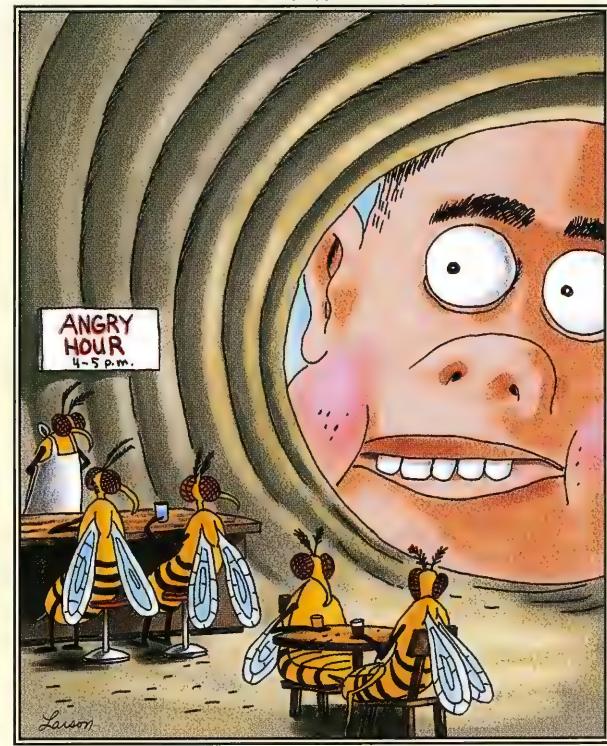
Fish funerals

10/15/90



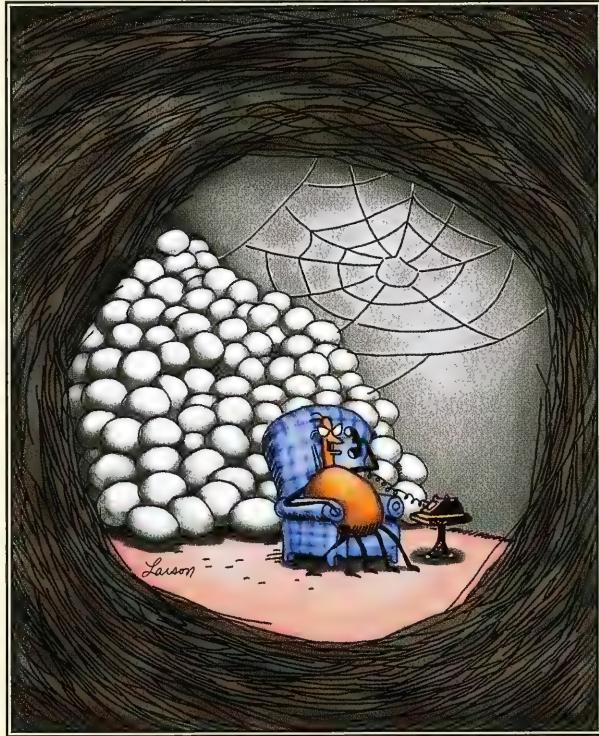
Hopeful parents

10/18/90



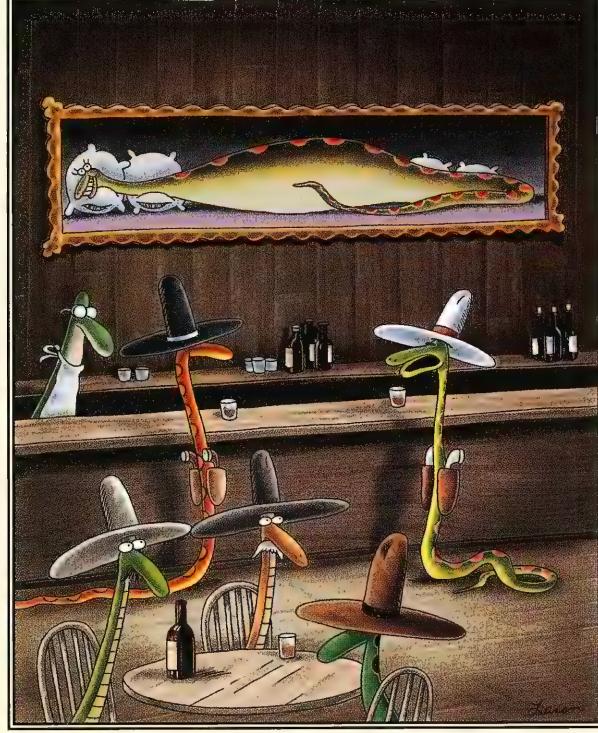
It was foolish for Russell to approach the hornets' nest in the first place, but his timing was particularly bad.

10/25/90



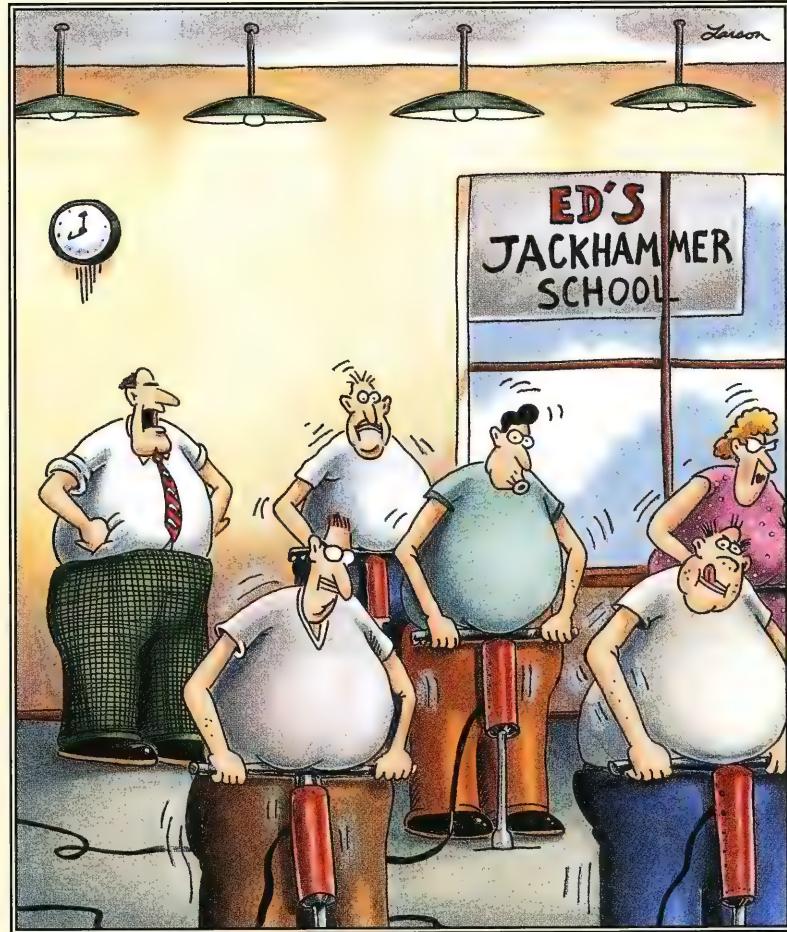
"Barbara, you just have to come over and see all my eggs! The address is: Doris Griswold, 5 feet 4 inches, 160 pounds, brown eyes— I'm in her hair."

10/31/90



"Who are we kidding, Luke? We know this is going to be just another standoff."

10/22/90



"C'mon! Keep those stomachs over the handles! Let the fat do the work! Let the fat do the work! ... That's it!"



THE FAR SIDE
FEBRUARY

1 1993
MONDAY

Dear Gary,
How do ants
know if it's
close or not
at this point
at time? Foot
in time
needs to be
drawn in
opposite - (toes
on ground heel
up) i.e. foot
has already
missed!
over

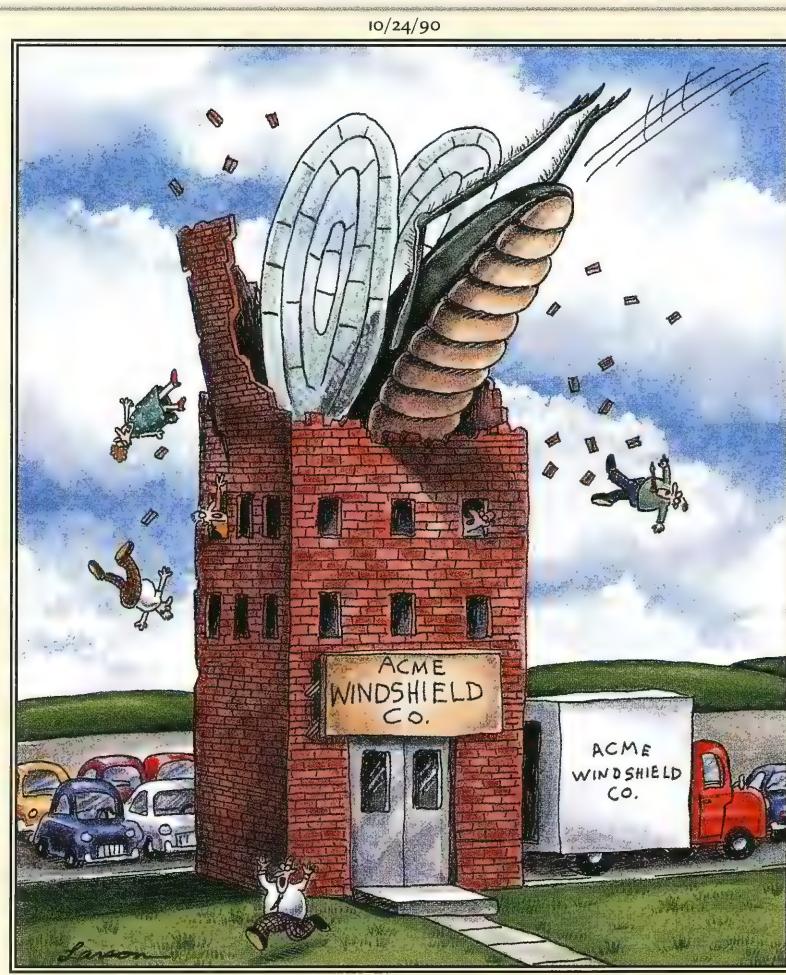
Am I wrong?
I landed and missed!

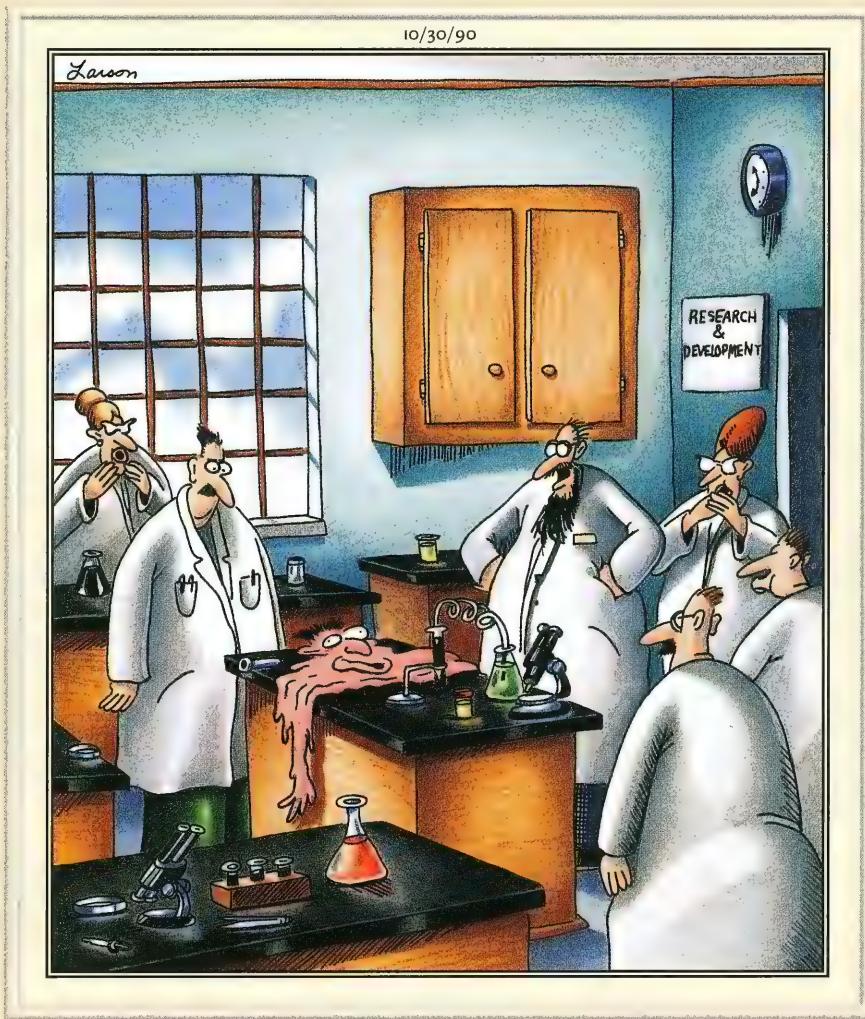
Feet are all heading toward
grape - no feet drawn
departing - therefore
physically at this instance
in time ants have no
way of knowing if grape
has been squashed or
was in danger of being
squashed - i.e. close!
Sorry to be a pinhead about
this, trust me - I'm a huge
fan. People think I'm
a nut at work cause I think
your cartoons are SO funny!
P.S. - they often do not "get it"!



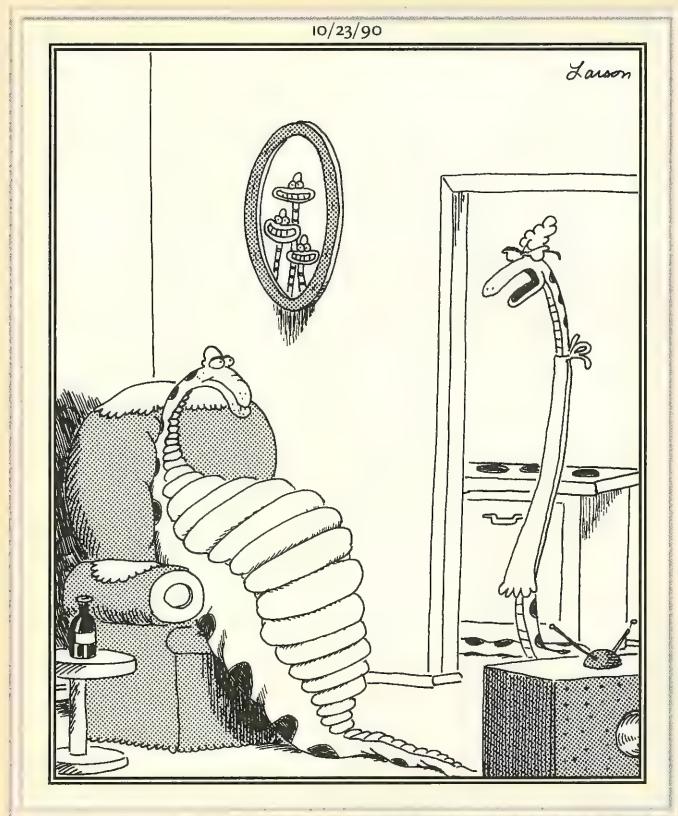
Larson

Young ants entertaining themselves
with a grape

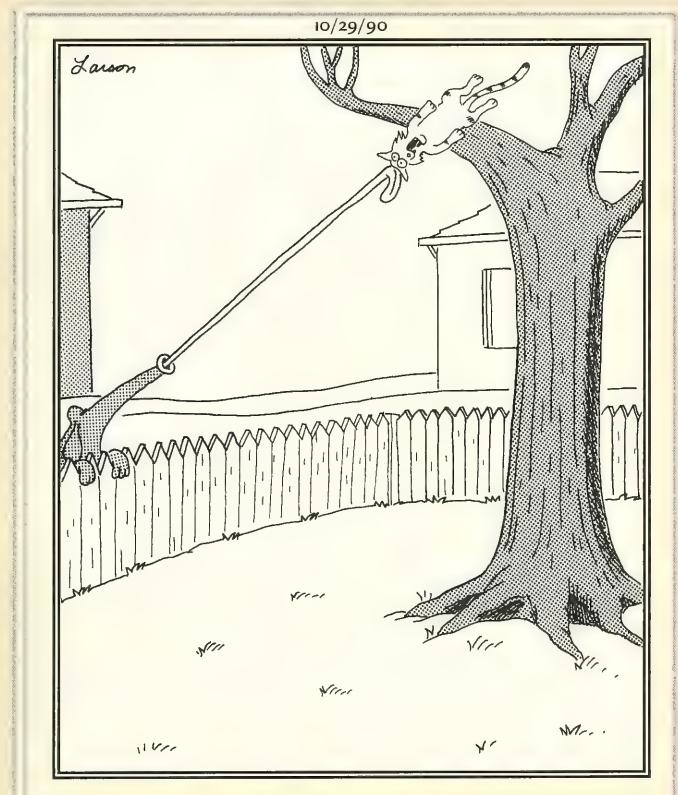




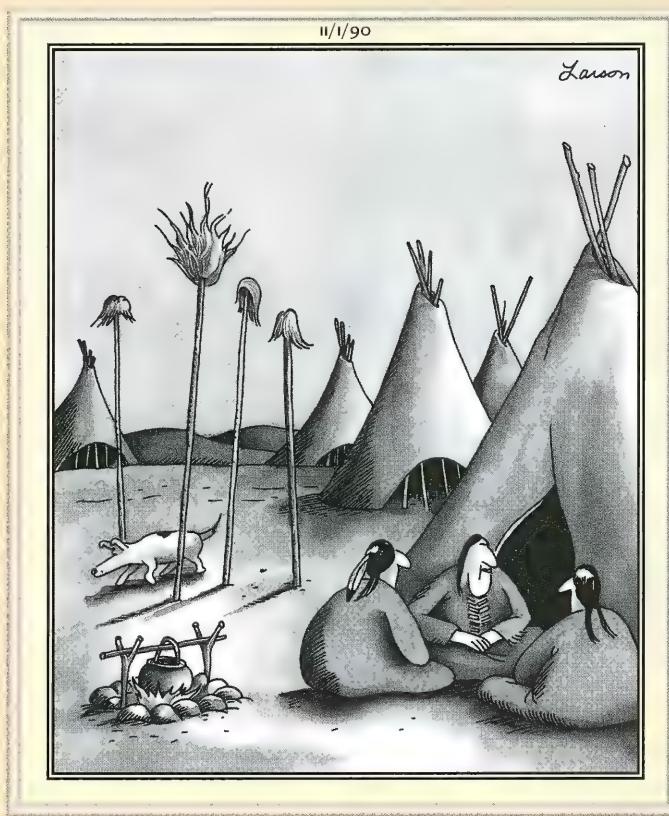
"My God! It is Professor Dickle! ... Weinberg, see if you can make out what the devil he was working on, and the rest of you get back to your stations."



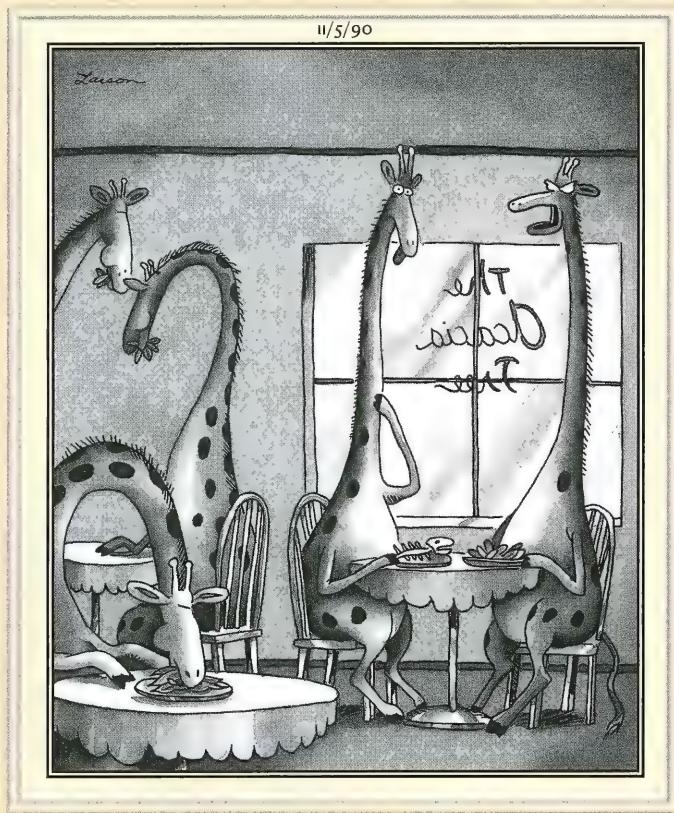
"Joe! You went and ate the pig I was going to serve this evening to the MacIntyres? ... Well, you just disgorge it—it should still be okay."



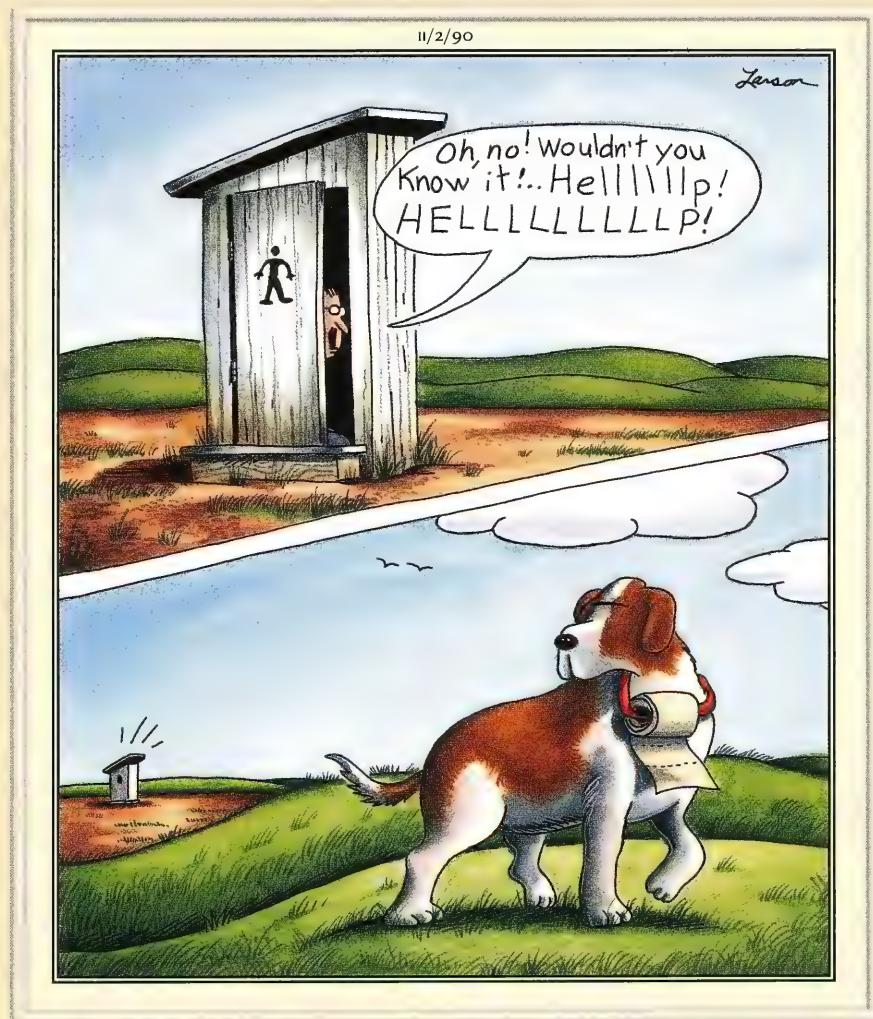
Aarddogs



The fate of Don King's great-great-grandfather



"Well, if there's a bone stuck in your throat, you deserve it! ... Do you see anyone else around here stupid enough to order fish?"



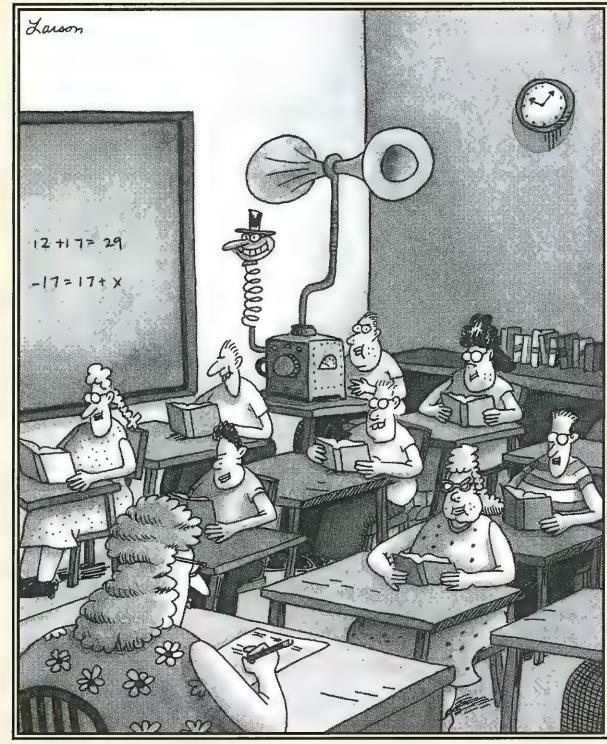
Faraway, on a hillside, a very specialized breed of dog heard the cry of distress.

11/7/90



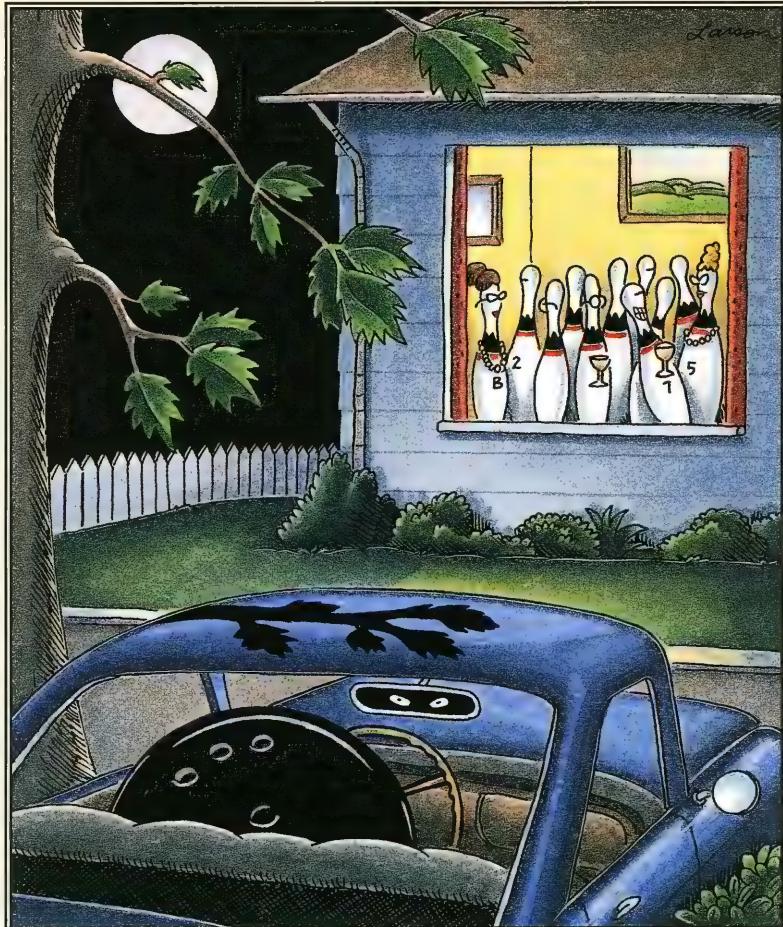
"It's just a miracle you pulled through, George. ... Why, it was only a few hours ago the whole family was deliberating on whether or not to wring your neck."

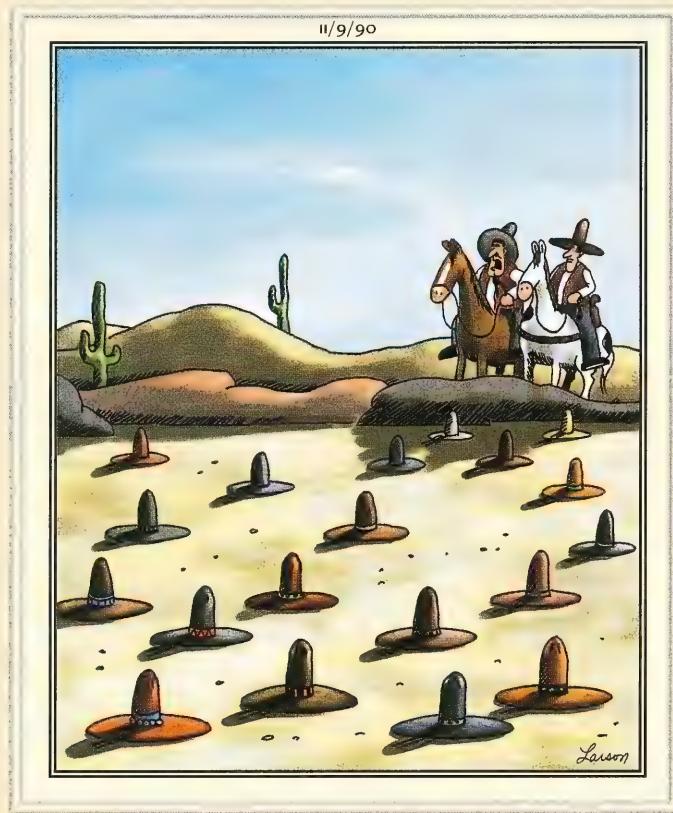
11/8/90



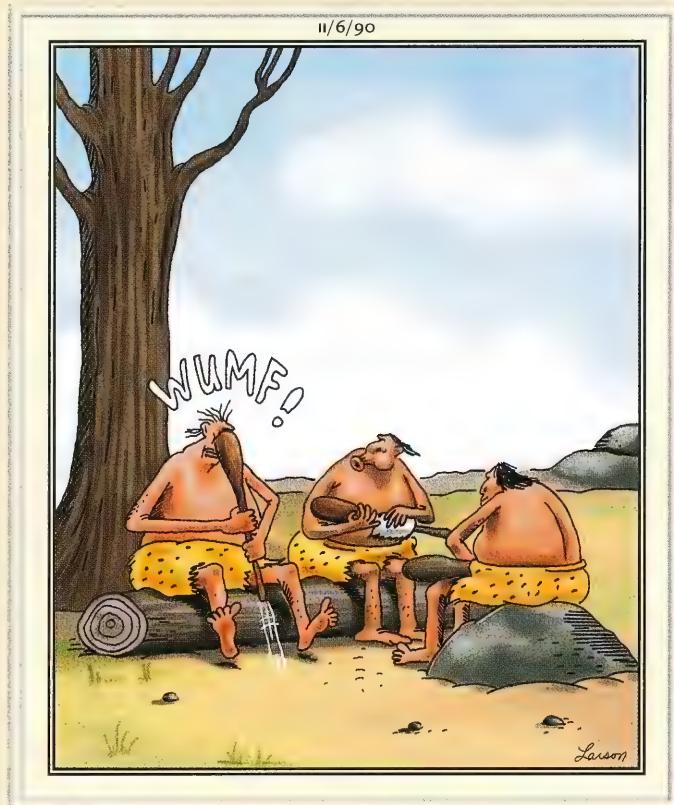
The class was quietly doing its lesson when Russell, suffering from problems at home, prepared to employ an attention-getting device.

11/12/90

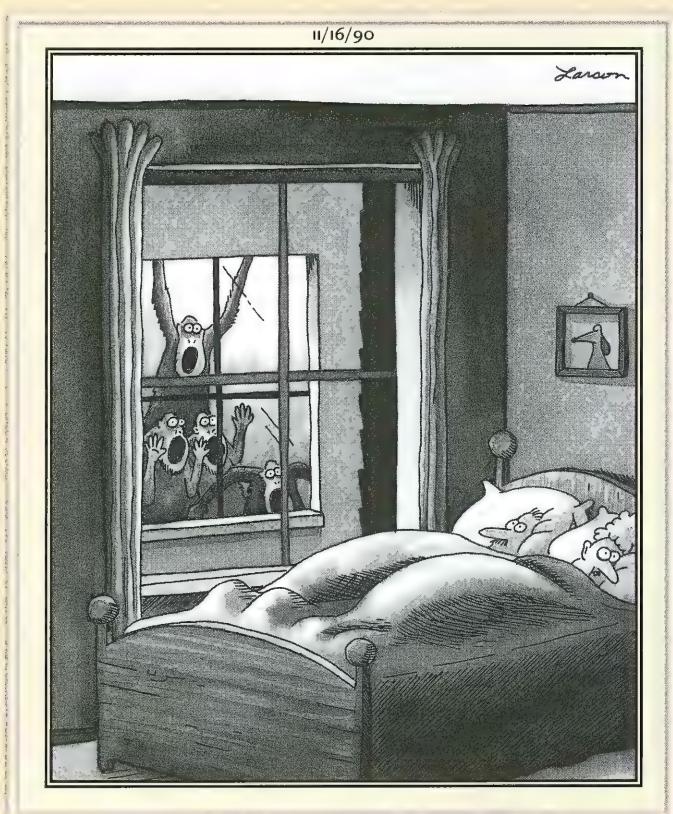




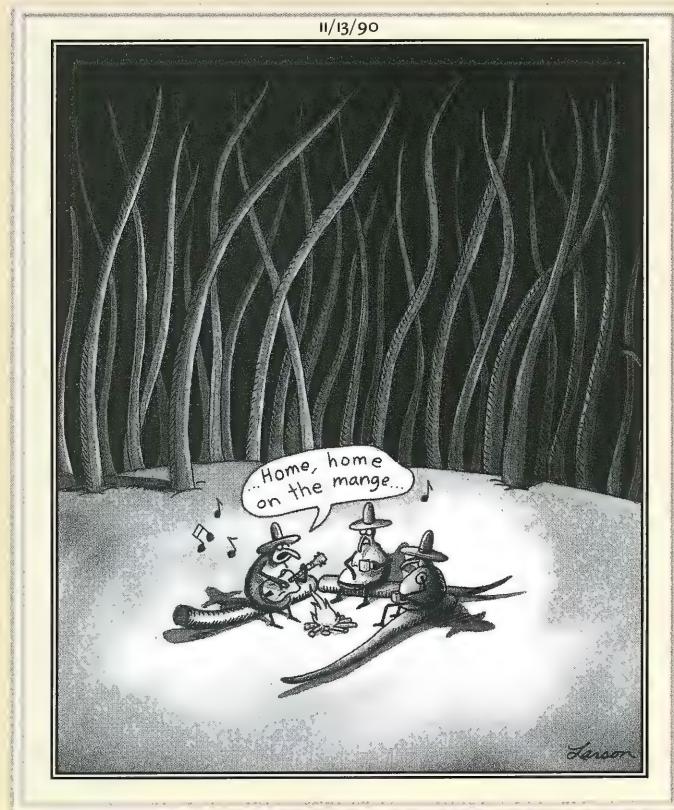
"We must be careful, Cisco! ... Thees could be the eenfamous Queeksand Beds of Chihuahua."



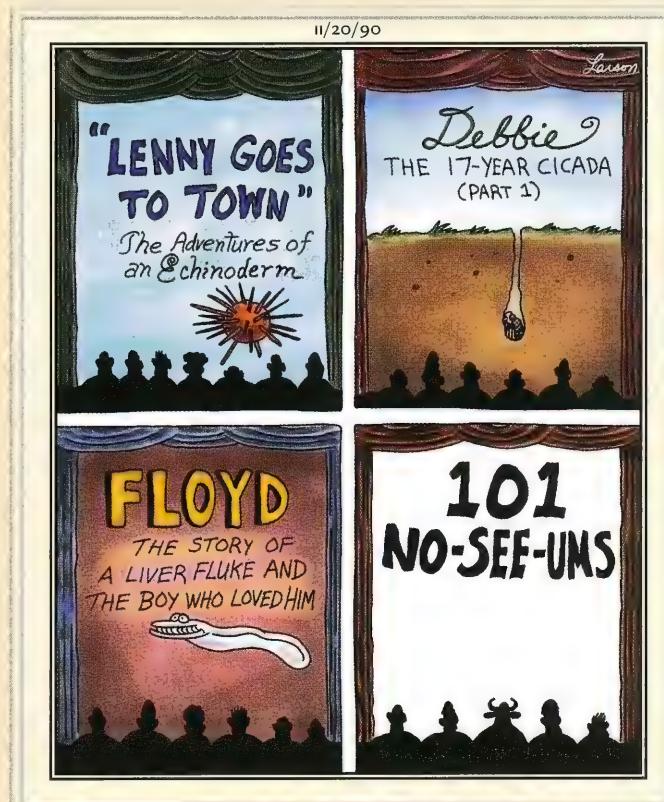
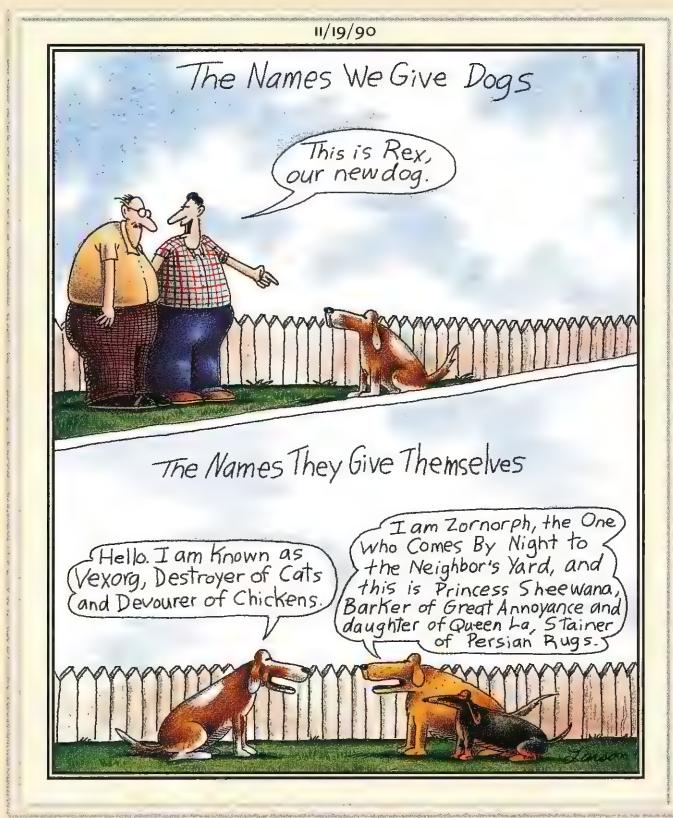
As the small band of hunter-gatherers sat around cleaning their weapons, one made the mistake of looking at his club straight on.



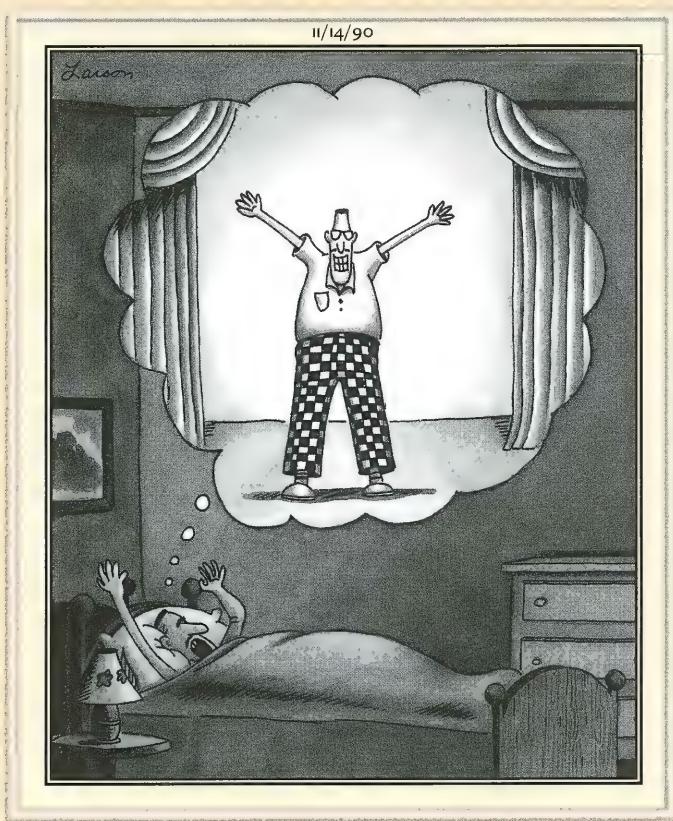
And so it went, night after night, year after year. In fact, the Hansens had been in a living hell ever since that fateful day the neighbor's "For Sale" sign had come down and a family of howler monkeys had moved in.



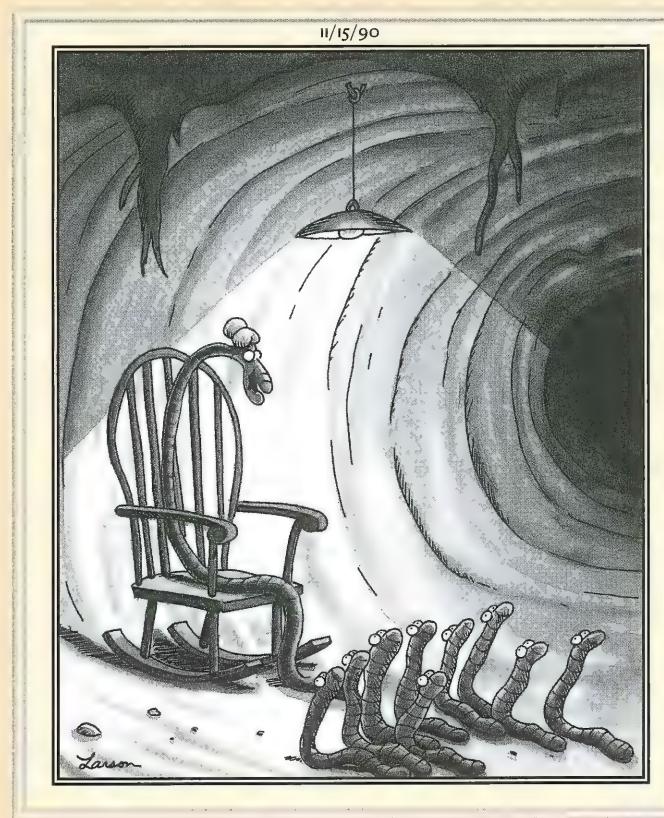
Fleaboys



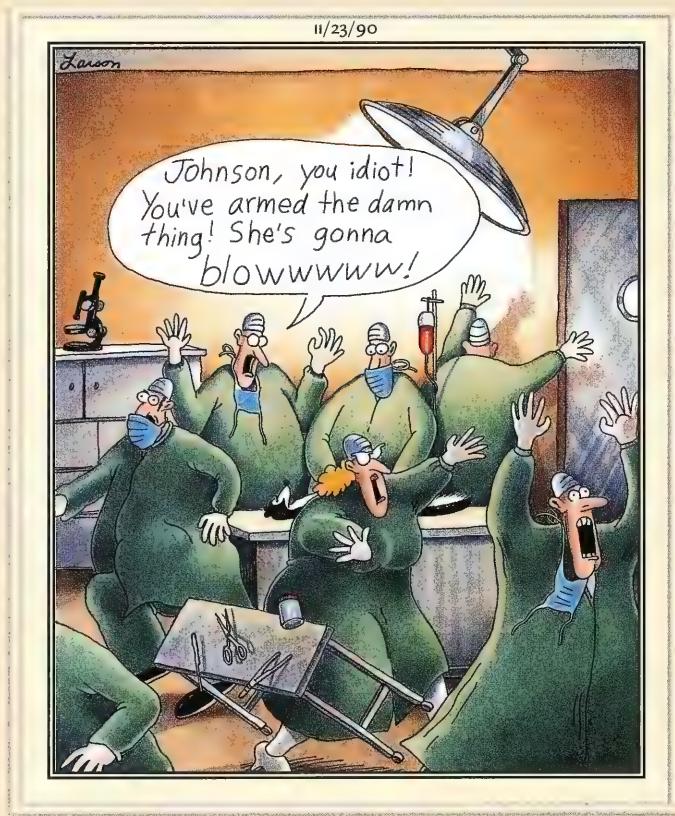
Nature films that Disney test-marketed but never released.



In a recurring nightmare, Arsenio Hall sees himself walk onstage wearing golf clothes.



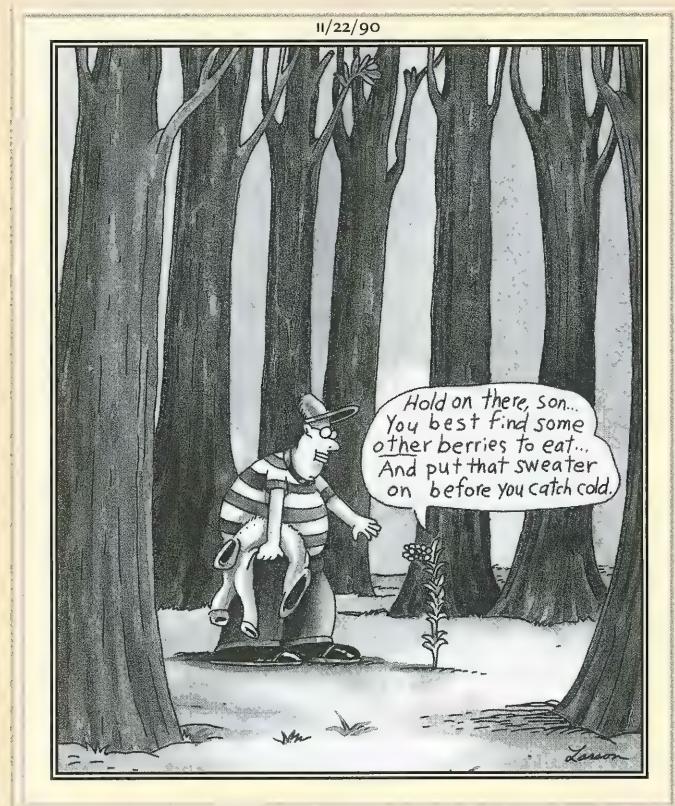
"That story again? ... Well, one stormy night, when the whole family was asleep, your grandfather quietly rose from his bed, took an ax, and made all you little grandkids."



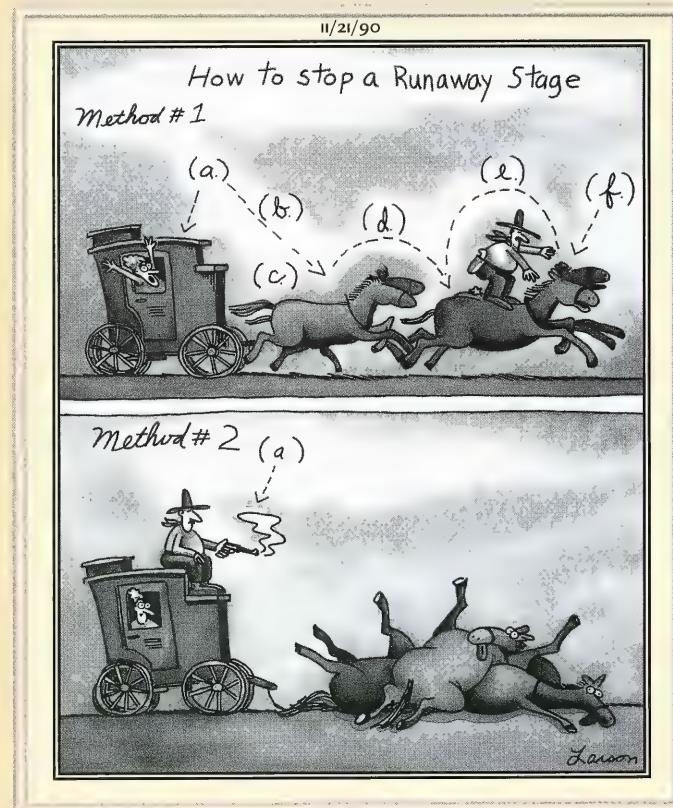
Feb. 22, 1952: Veterinarians attempt the first skunk de-scenting operation.



Buffalo, N.Y., Nov. 2-5: The annual convention of the Big Galoot Society of America

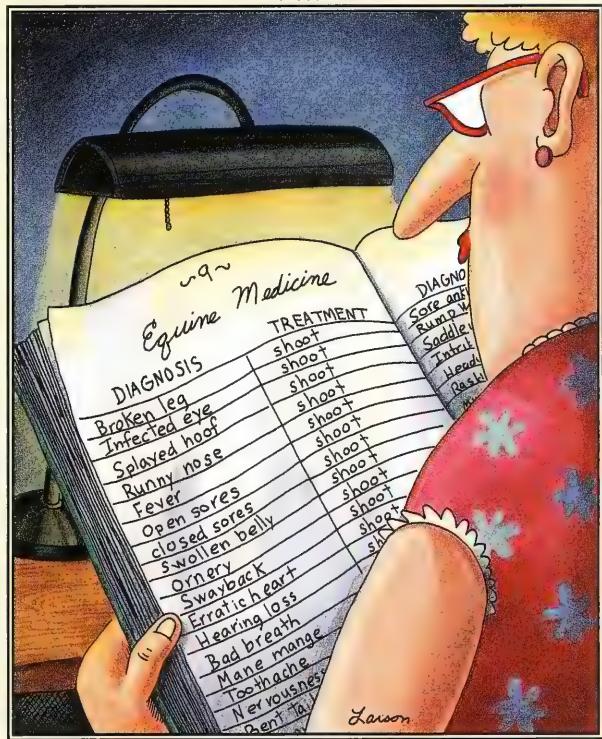


Luckily, Eddie had stumbled upon a rare variety of deadly nightshade, the amicable *Atropa belladonna congenialocus*. (Later that same day, however, he blundered into some poison oak—a flat-out intolerant species.)



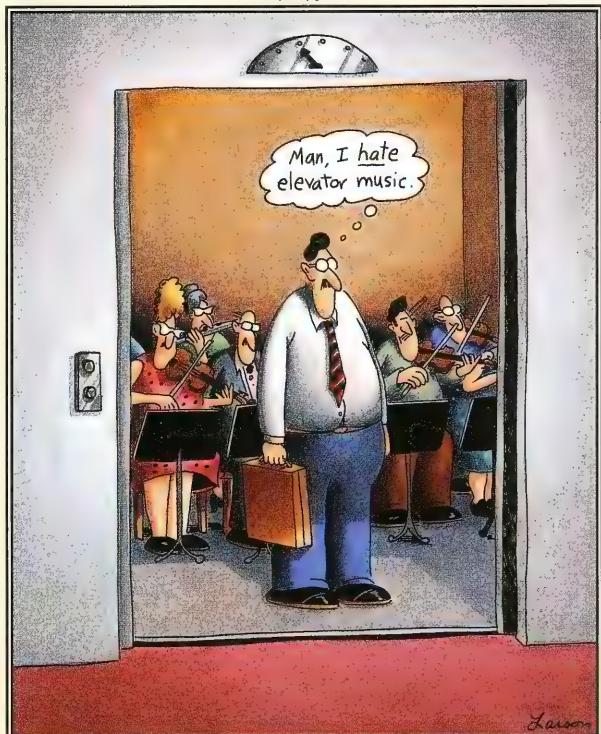
From the book *Guide to Western Stuff*

11/29/90

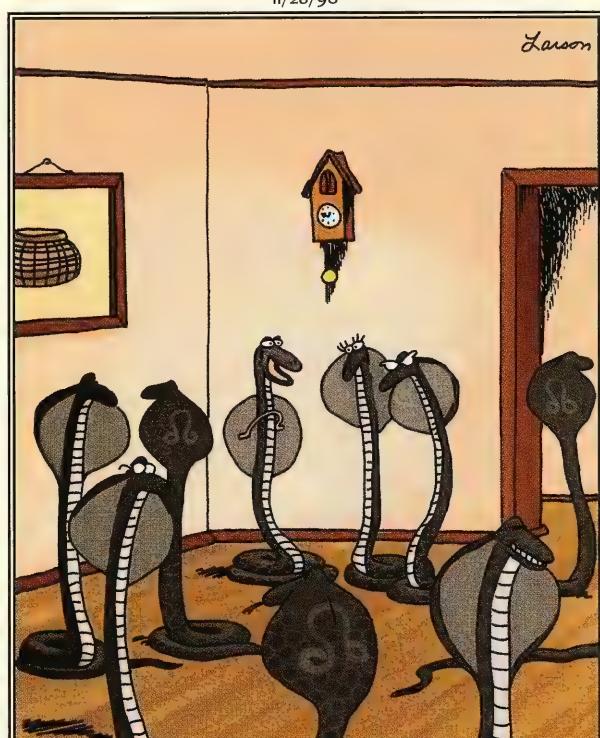


Like most veterinary students, Doreen breezes through chapter 9.

11/26/90

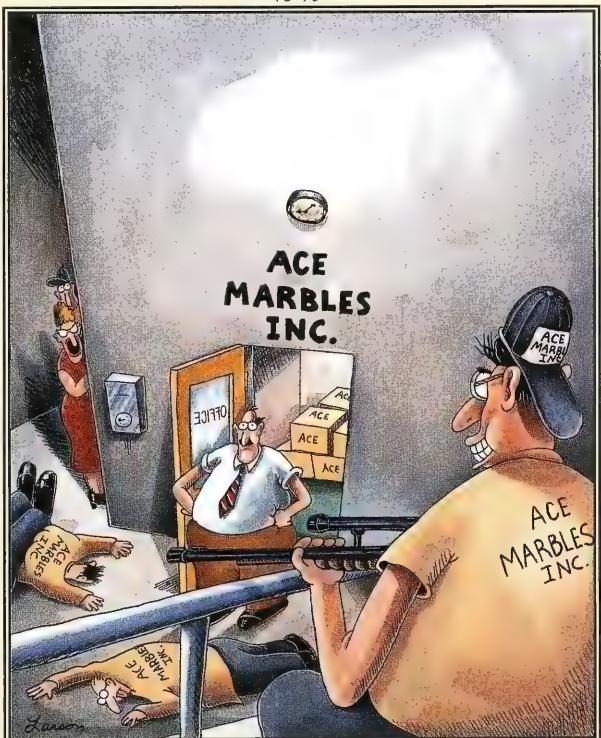


11/28/90



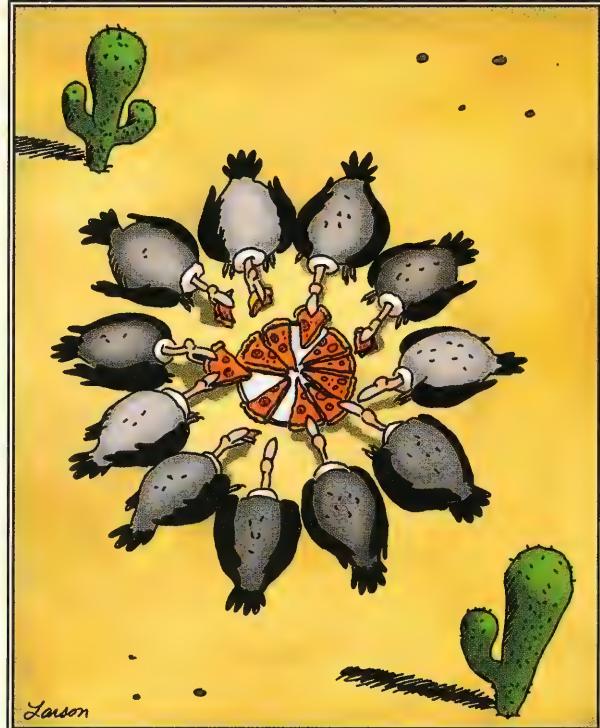
In the corner, Vance was putting the move on two females—unaware that his fake hood had begun to slip.

11/30/90



Misunderstanding his employees' screams of "Simmons has lost his marbles!" Mr. Wagner bursts from his office for the last time.

12/5/90



Perspectives in nature we rarely enjoy

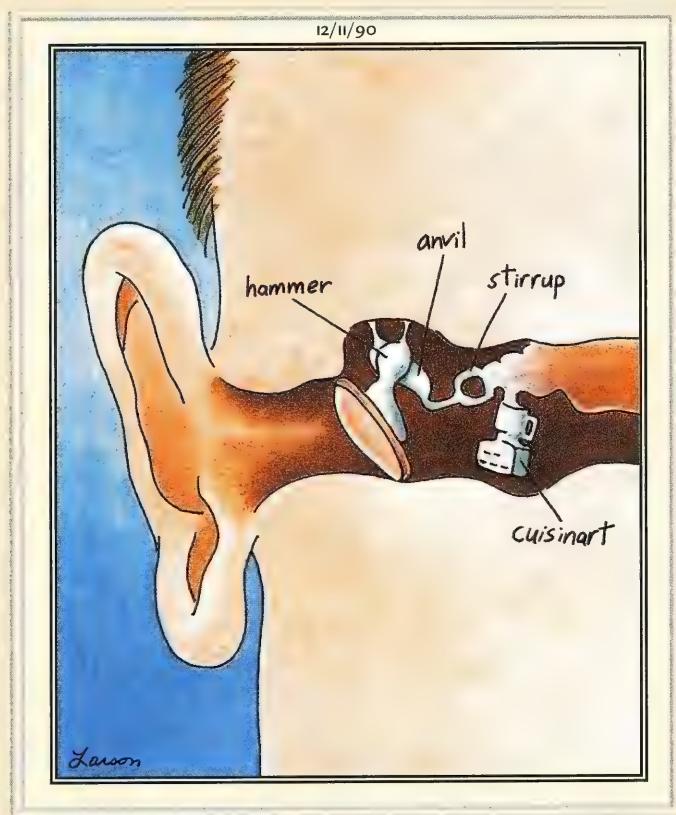
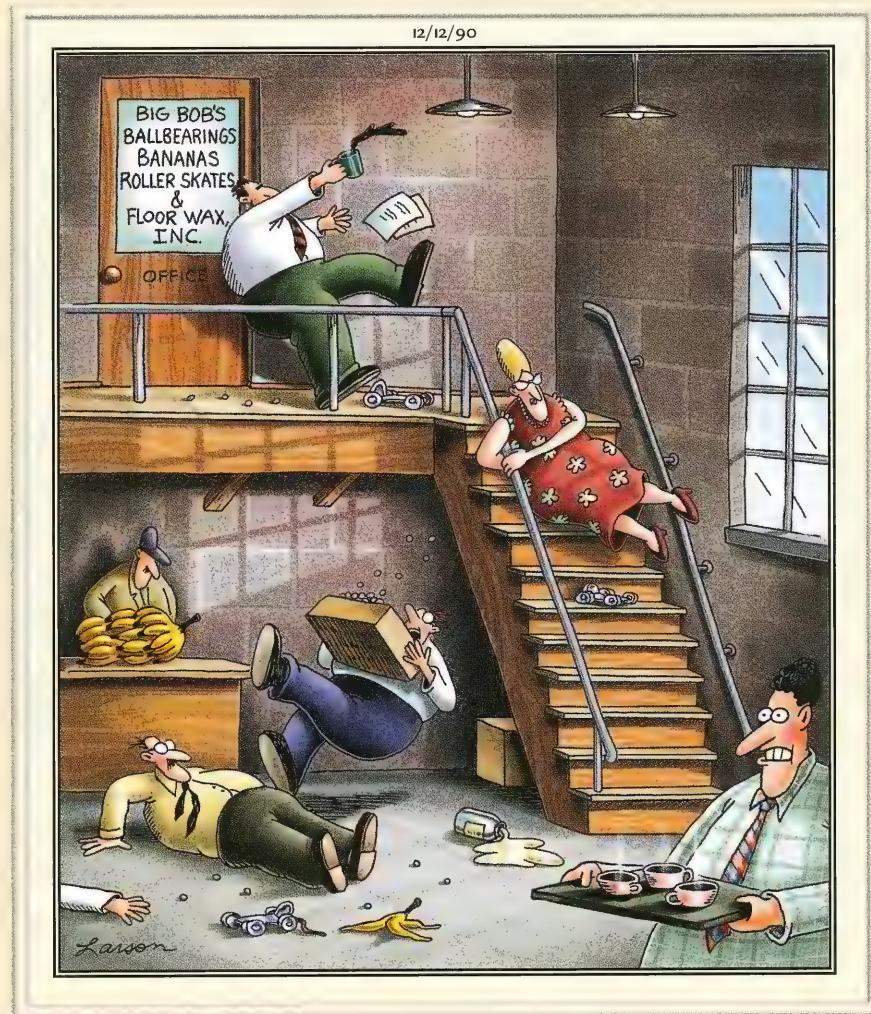
12/10/90



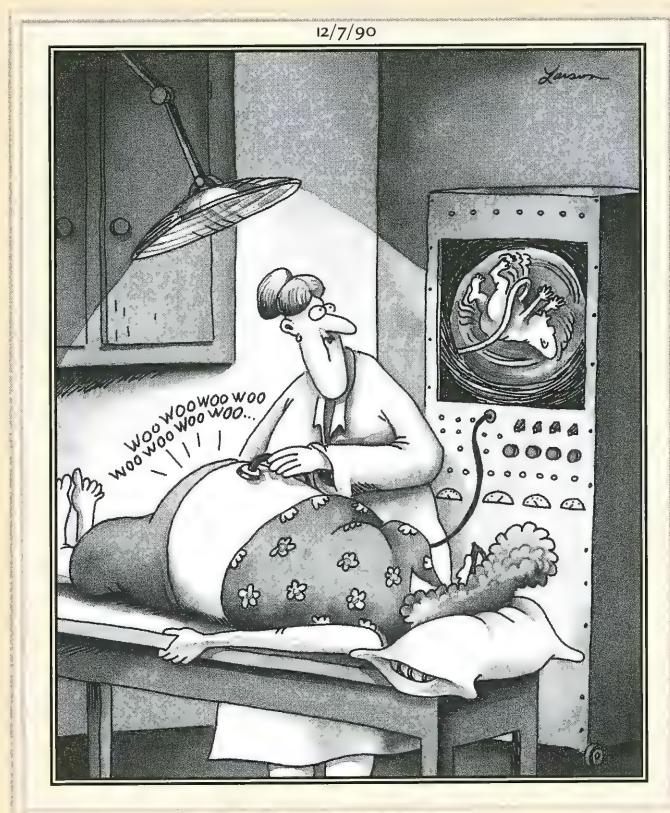
"Good heavens, John! Call someone! ...
The entire basement looks dry!"

12/4/90





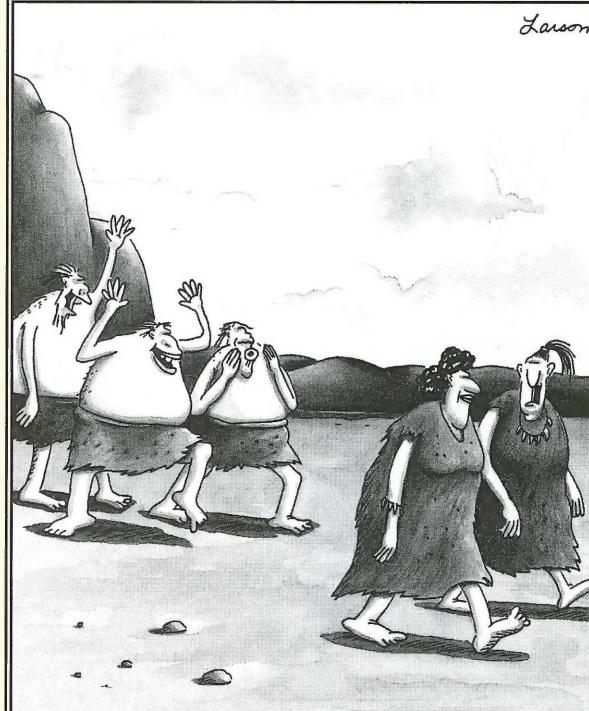
Professor Harold Rosenbloom's diagram of the middle ear, proposing his newly discovered fourth bone.



The prenatal development of Curly

12/3/90

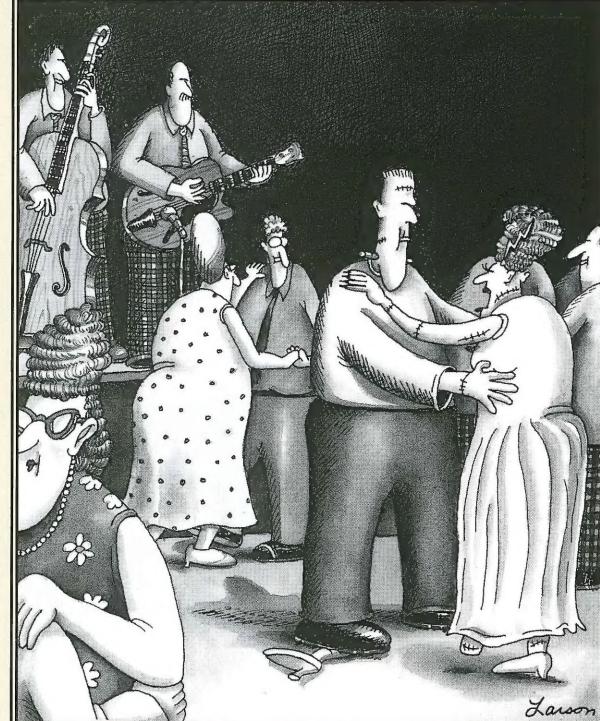
Larson



"They're Neanderthals, Loona. ...
Every one of them."

12/6/90

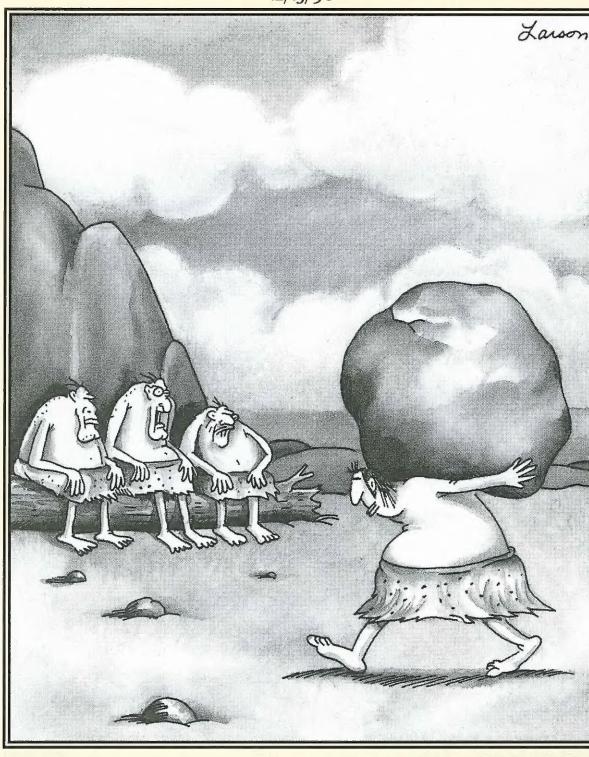
Larson



"Idiot! ... You're standing on my foot!"

12/13/90

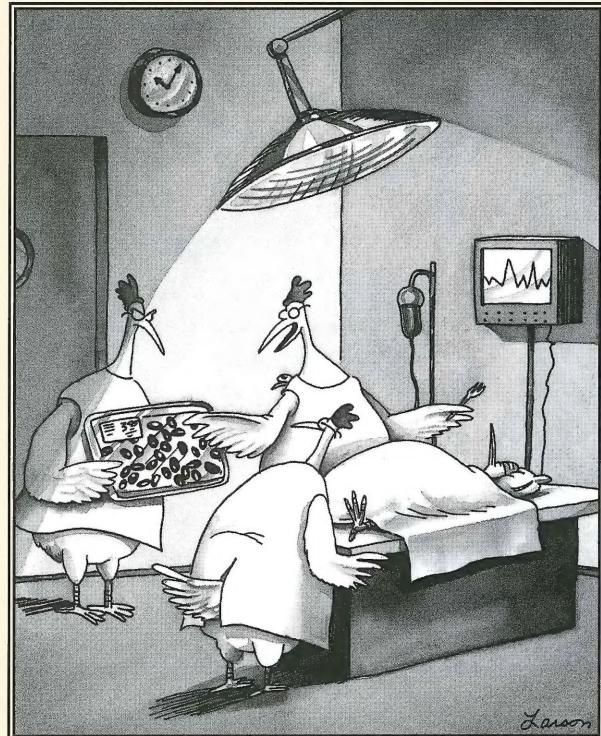
Larson



"Would you look at that? ... By thunder, you
couldn't do that in *our* day—yessiree, the
rocks were just a lot heavier back then."

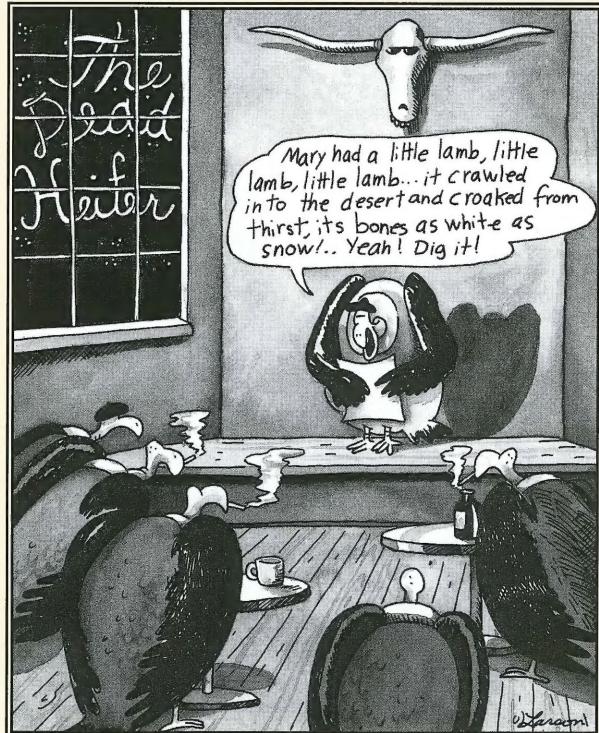
12/14/90

Larson



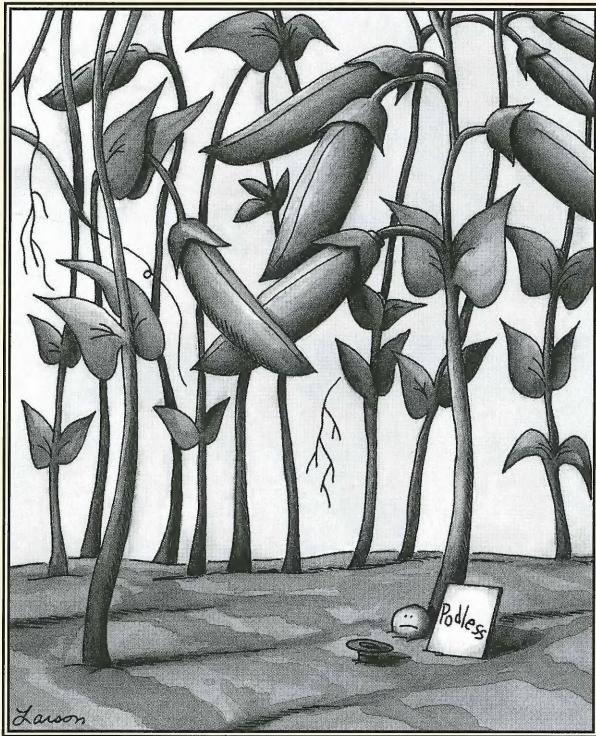
"Okay, we're ready for the donor heart. ...
Oh, very good. I see we once again have
a big selection."

12/17/90

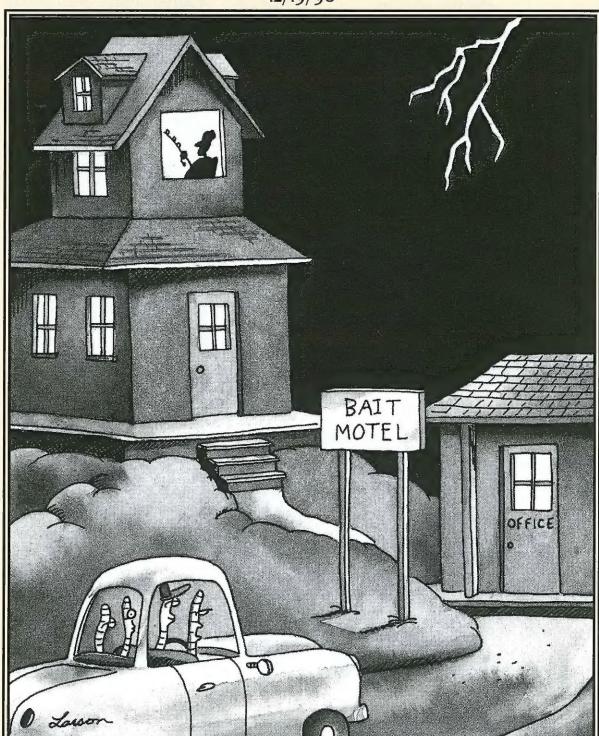


Buzzard beakniks

12/18/90

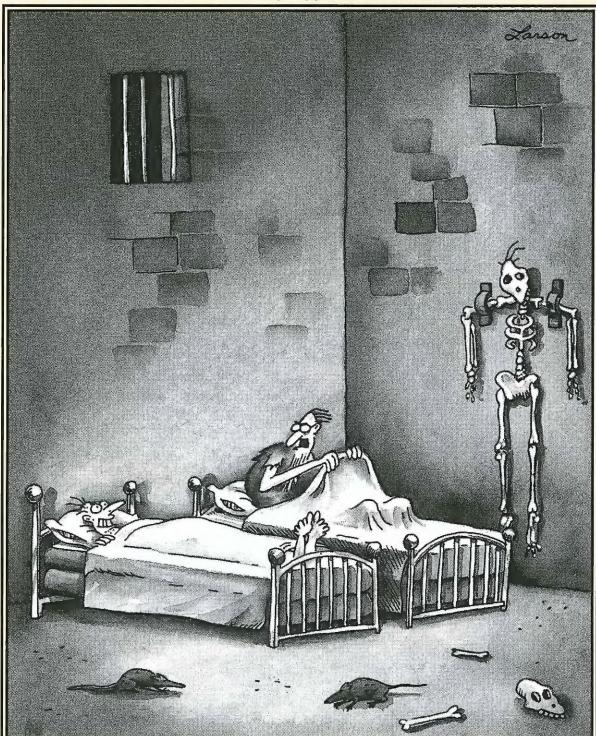


12/19/90



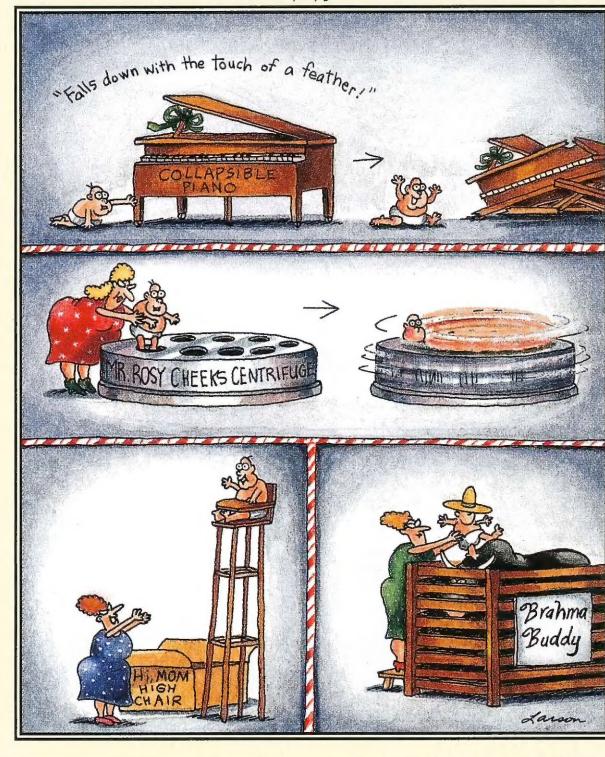
"Say, Anthony, this looks like a pleasant little place."

12/20/90



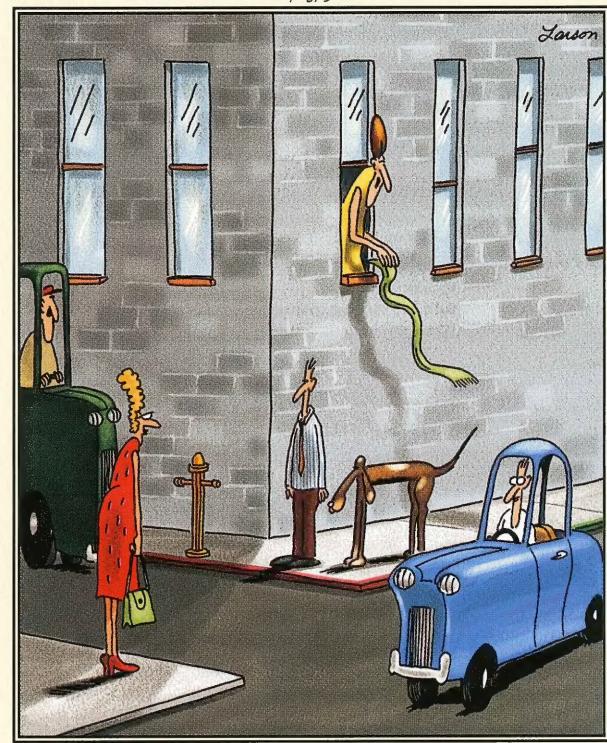
"Short-sheeted my bed, didn't you, Jenkins? ... You know, I could make your life miserable, too!"

12/21/90



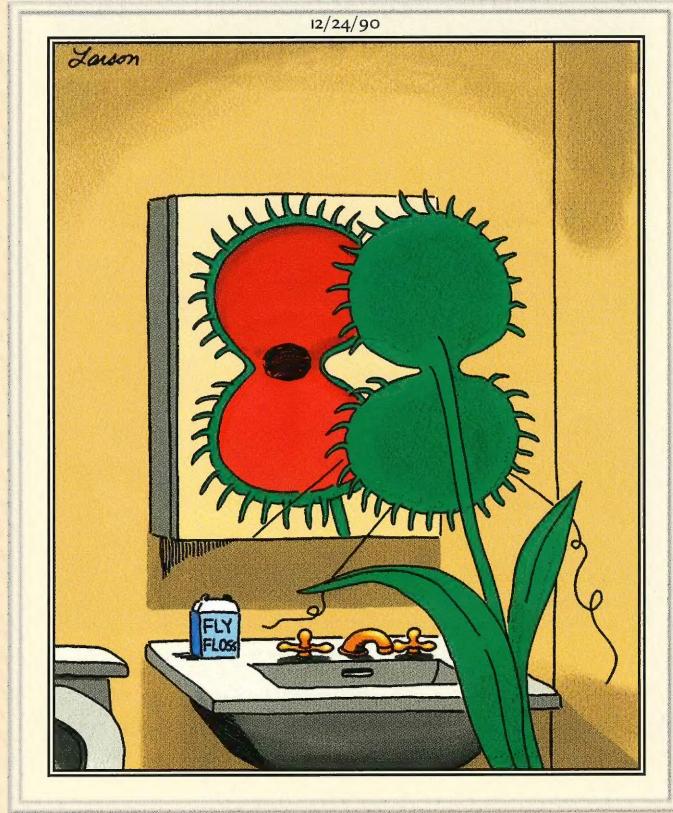
Baby toys and gifts to avoid this Christmas

12/25/90

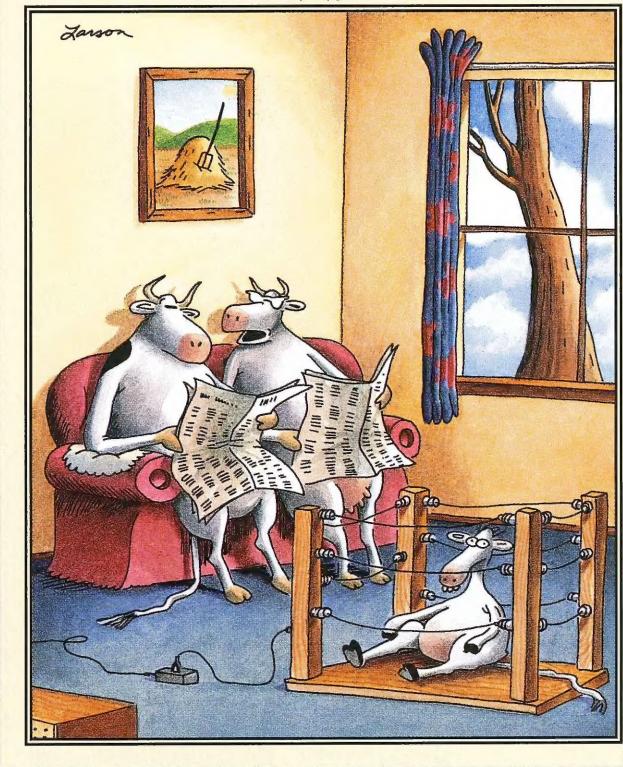


Far Side Lite: Not funny, but better for you.

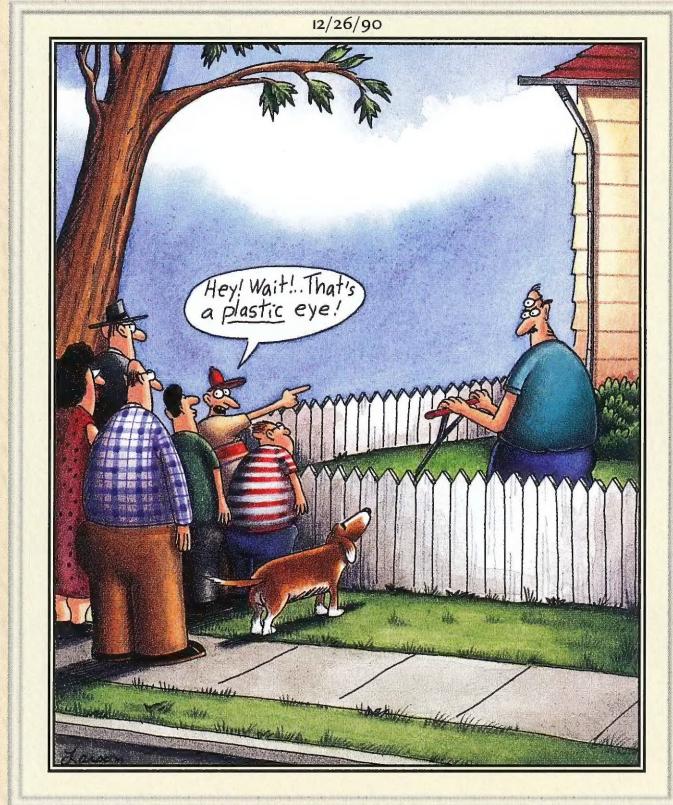
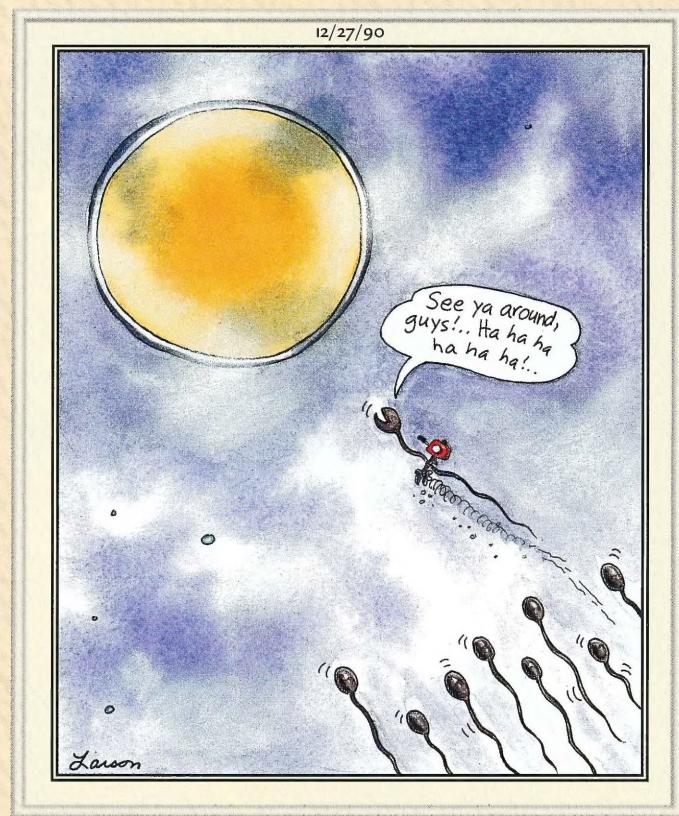
12/24/90



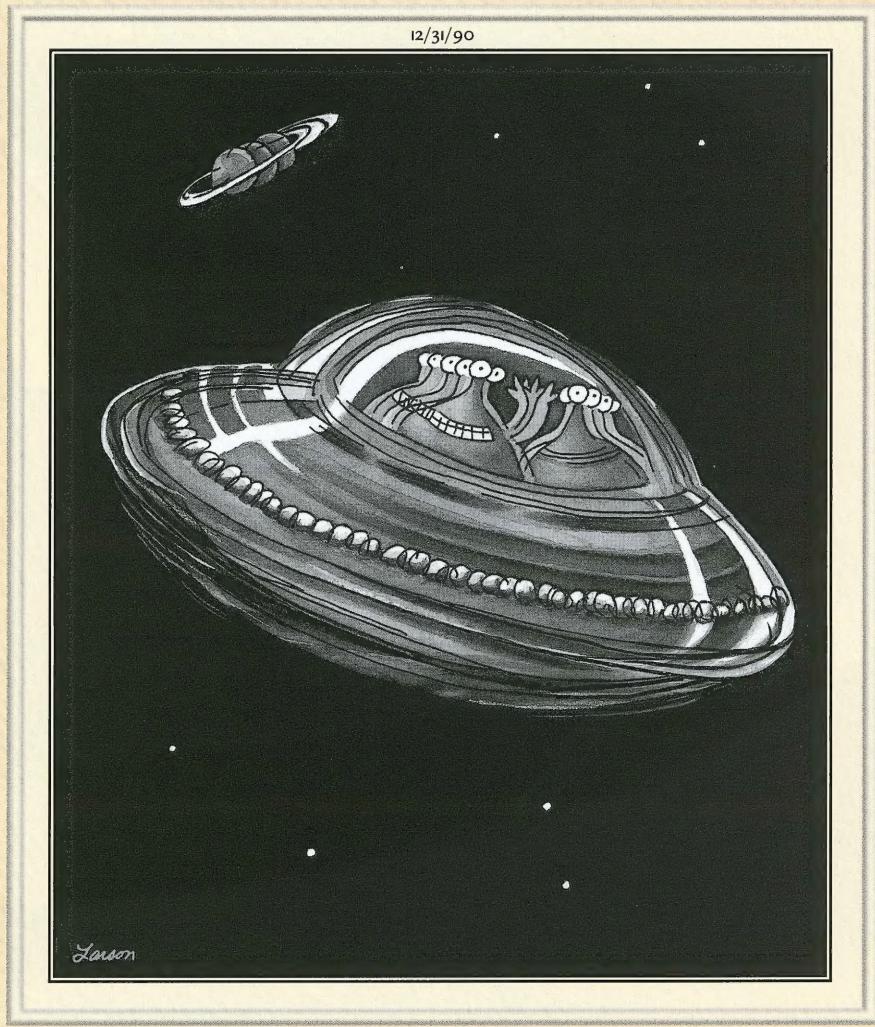
12/28/90



"Ben—what d'ya say we turn the power off for a while and let the little guy roam around?"



And with Johnny's revelation, Mr. Goodman's popularity in the neighborhood suddenly plummeted.



Another photograph from the Hubble Space Telescope